



"The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1)

REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

SEPTEMBER 2006

What's Happening?

Chapter Meeting

The Seattle Chapter will hold a meeting October 28, 8:30 to 10:30 AM, at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Shoreline. The meeting will focus on Dr. Ross' new book, "Creation as Science." Join us! We will have books available for purchase.

Dead Sea Scrolls

The Pacific Science Center is opening a new exhibit, "Discovering the Dead Sea Scrolls," on September 23rd. There will be also be a lecture series on the Dead Sea scrolls at Townhall in Seattle. The first lecture is September 27. Go to www.pacificsciencecenter.org for information.

We Do Presentations

If your church or group is looking for a speaker, the Seattle chapter does presentations on wide range of topics ranging from the scientific evidences pointing to God, to the age of the earth debate. Contact us for more information at seattle@reasons.org.

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Old Earth Creationism: Setting the Record Straight

JON W. GREENE

NOTE: This is the second half of the article that began last month.

THE THREE BARA'S

The Hebrew word for "create" (*bara*) in Genesis 1 has profound theological significance, since it only has God as its subject. The three *bara*'s of Genesis 1 will serve as a framework for a brief examination of the findings of science. Some of the strongest evidences for special creation come from mainstream science! As a general rule, these findings are rejected by the young-earth community.



The First Bara

In the beginning God created (bara) the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1, NASB)

A common misconception is the "big bang" is just another atheistic attempt to explain away the need for a Creator. The OEC view is that God created the "heavens and the earth" billions of years ago through the mechanism of the "big bang". Young earth creationists speak of the big bang as merely a naturalistic process—"a secular humanist belief," "a big bang evolutionary model," "a chaotic explosion caused by nothing." However, let's take a closer look.

"Big bang" was coined as a derisive term by cosmologist Fred Hoyle, who believed the universe was eternal and had no beginning. Agnostic and atheistic astronomers disliked the idea of a beginning because it implied the necessity of a "Beginner." As cosmologist Sir Arthur Eddington commented, "Philosophically, the notion of a beginning of the present order of Nature is repugnant ... I should like to find a genuine loophole ... We [must] allow evolution an infinite time to get started."⁴⁸ Thus, the big bang beginning was the antithesis of the naturalistic worldview.

Big Bang cosmogeny posits the universe sprang into existence from an infinitely small volume of nothing—that is, prior to the big bang, there was no pre-existing matter or energy. From an OEC perspective, God purposely spoke the universe into

existence (Psalm 33:9) and sovereignly controlled the creation event. All matter, energy, space, and time were created (*bara*) simultaneously at the big bang. From that first instant, the universe expanded outward, resulting in the formation of all stars, planets and galaxies.

This is consistent with numerous Biblical verses that speak of: (1) the universe having a beginning (e.g., Genesis 1:1); (2) the universe being brought into existence ex nihilo from no pre-existing substance (e.g., Psalm 33:6-9, Hebrews 11:3); and (3) God “stretching out the heavens” (e.g., Job 9:8, Psalm 104:2, Isaiah 40:22, Zechariah 12:1, and many others).

The author of Hebrews wrote “the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:3). Main-stream astronomers speak of a big bang creation event that is remarkably similar to Biblical creation. Here is what leading scientists say.

- “Astronomy leads us to a unique event, a universe which was created out of nothing.” Arno Penzias, Nobel Prize, Physics⁴⁹
- “This unthinkable void converts itself into the plenum of existence ... It would seem that even the void is subject to law, a logic that exists prior to time and space.” Heinz Pagels, Theoretical Physics⁵⁰

Though the Big Bang hypothesis was initially rejected by astronomers due to the supernatural implications, science followed the data, which has now lead to evidence of exquisite design! As Christians, we should not shrink from science; we should embrace it. As in Galileo’s day, scientific understanding of God’s world can enhance our theological understanding of God’s Word. William Lane Craig, respected Christian philosopher puts it this way: “This cosmological singularity, from which the universe sprang, marked the beginning, not only of all matter and energy in the universe, but of physical space and time themselves. The Big Bang model thus dramatically and unexpectedly supported the biblical doctrine of creatio ex nihilo.”⁵¹

Some of the strongest apologetic arguments within Christianity pertain to the extremely fine-tuned of properties of the expanding universe, which implicitly relate to the big bang creation event. This fine-tuning, discovered in just the past two decades, has profound theological implications, leading some astronomers to genuinely ponder supernatural causation:

- “What we have found is evidence for the birth of the universe ... It’s like looking at God.” George Smoot, Astronomer, UC Berkeley⁵²
- “It would be very difficult to explain why the universe should have begun in just this way, except as the act of a God who intended to create beings like us.” Stephen Hawking⁵³
- “A common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology.” Sir Fred Hoyle⁵⁴

Without the exquisitely fine-tuned properties of the universe, life could not exist. For instance, the initial velocity or rate of expansion of the universe is fine-tuned to a precision of 1 part in 10⁵⁵. Had the rate of expansion been too slow or too fast, stars and planets could not have formed. More than 100 such examples of fine-tuning

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In the NEWS...

[Religion in Public Schools](#)

This Breakpoint commentary by Mark Earley discusses resources available to help parents determine what is legally permissible in public schools. Go to: <http://www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=2600>.

[America’s Most Popular Religion](#)

This article by Michael Medved discusses a recent Gallup Poll asking respondents how they felt about ten different religious groups. Jews scored the highest and Medved provides insights on why. Go to: http://www.townhall.com/columnists/MichaelMedved/2006/09/13/surprise_as_americas_most_popular_religion.

[Let Freedom Ring](#)

This Focus on the Family article by Bruce Hausknecht discusses the erroneous phrase “separation of church and state.” Go to: <http://www.family.org/fofmag/pp/a0041609.cfm>.

[Science and Religion](#)

This article by Thomas Brewton explores the historical link between religion and science, and comments on the issue of why atheistic materialists want to build a wall between the two. Go to: <http://acuf.org/issues/issue67/060911cul.asp>.

[Of Rats and Men](#)

This Breakpoint article by Chuck Colson discusses a recent experiment with rats: one group was bred for tameness, the other for aggressiveness. The goal? To promote the Darwinian idea that we are simply a product of our genes. Go to: <http://www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=2820>.

[A Matter of Conscience](#)

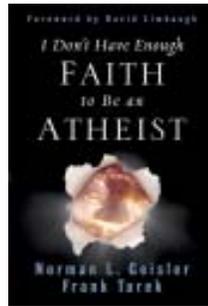
This article by Jay Sekulow discusses recent court rulings supporting the pro-life movement, including one regarding the morning-after pill. Go to: http://www.townhall.com/columnists/JaySekulow/2006/09/13/a_matter_of_conscience.

Book Reviews

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist

Norman Geisler & Frank Turek
Crossway Books, 2004

Reviewer: Mike Brown



In the foreword, David Limbaugh expresses a frustration I have had. When someone asks you to recommend a book for a friend who is a skeptic, how do you pick one that will do the trick? You know the person will probably not agree to read *several* books, but you can't think of one that adequately addresses the major issues. After reading the first few chapters of this book, Limbaugh (and I) was convinced this is the book.

My daughter teaches apologetics at a Christian High School. One student, whose mother is a Christian and dad is an atheist, gave her a book his dad wanted her to read. It's titled *Losing Faith In Faith*, by an evangelist turned atheist. My daughter promised to read it if he and his Dad would read *I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist*. The student reports his Dad has been avidly reading it almost every night.

This is an excellent resource for *anyone* who wants evidence for Christianity—not just atheists. It is very readable, and provides convincing arguments and evidences for objective truth, intelligent design, the Creator of the Bible, and the deity of Christ! The authors also address such controversial subjects as the problem of evil, miracles, and the Jesus Seminar.

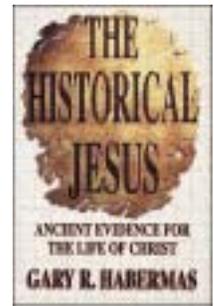
I have already incorporated some of the material into my apologetics class, including a great introduction to complex specified information by way of a humorous illustration. The authors tell the story of a young man who finds his Alpha-Bits cereal spilled on the table with the message "TAKE OUT THE GARBAGE-MOM" but chalks it up to mindless natural laws. He uses the same logic to dismiss a heart drawn in the sand with the message "Mary loves Scott", the names of the girl he likes and his best friend, but finally has to admit intelligent design when he sees "Drink Coke" written in the sky.

Lee Strobel said, "I wish [this book] had been available when I was an atheist—it would have saved a lot of time in my spiritual journey toward God." According to Josh McDowell, "If you're still a skeptic after reading [this book], then I suspect you're living in denial."

The Historical Jesus

Gary R. Habermas
College Press Publishing, 1996

Reviewer: Greg Moore



Some people argue the historical account of Jesus that is presented in the Gospels is not totally accurate. Some go so far as to suggest the Gospel writers were not motivated by historical concerns but a desire to communicate religious propaganda. Many such critics have sought to cast Jesus as a political revolutionary or even a magician. This book takes a critical look at these claims.

Habermas compiles historical data from both Christian and non-Christian sources to defend the Gospels' portrait of Jesus as God and savior. He begins by examining the early Christian creeds which preserve some of the earliest information on the life of Jesus. This is followed by a review of the archaeological data. He then examines non-Christian and Christian (non-New Testament) information about Jesus. His conclusion is not only are the Gospel accounts historically accurate but Jesus' life is one of the most mentioned and most substantiated in ancient times—in fact, much of ancient history is based on much fewer sources and less information.

Habermas also dismantles the many fictitious tales that have been spun about Jesus. He examines the Swoon Theory, the claim Jesus survived death on the cross and was later revived. He examines the claim Jesus was a member of secret Essene society. He examines the notion Jesus was married, had children and his bloodline can be traced through royal families, secret organizations and age-old mysteries—first popularized in the book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. He also takes a critical look at the radical Jesus Seminar which attempts to downplay the supernatural, especially in the life of Jesus.

I recommend this book as an important tool to have in your apologetics arsenal. Science, historical and philosophical apologetics can open unbelievers' minds to the possibility of God. However, we still need to be able to demonstrate that Christianity is true. The Historical Jesus is very helpful in equipping apologists to respond to contemporary criticisms of the orthodox view of Jesus.

have been discovered. Without a Mind or Intelligence prior to the big bang creation event to orchestrate this fine-tuning, no physical universe would be possible and life could not exist. Thus, scientific findings provide truly amazing evidence for the Master Designer. Perhaps the Big Bang should be renamed the Big *Bara*! Not only do the heavens declare the glory of God, so does the Big *Bara* creation event.

The Second *Bara*

God created (bara) the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves... and every winged bird after its kind... (Genesis 1:21, NASB)

In this second *bara* God creates life on earth. To get the full impact of this creation event, we need to return to Genesis 1:2, “*and the earth was formless and void.*” Scientists confirm the empty and desolate condition of the early earth. From the creation of the Earth 4.5 billion years ago through 3.85 billion years ago, asteroids and comets bombarded Earth with such intensity the heat melted the earth’s surface. No conceivable life forms or even basic pre-biotic molecules could have survived anywhere on the seething planet during this period.⁵⁵ Scientists call this the Hadean Era, after the Greek word for hell, Hades.

However, contrary to what naturalistic evolutionary models would predict, life abruptly appeared on Earth immediately after the Hadean Era, approximately 3.8 billion years ago;⁵⁶ some have even pushed the date back to 3.88 billion years ago. This means life appeared at the earliest possible moment in time. There was no time for evolution to occur. During the Hadean Era, 4.5 to 3.8 billion years ago, earth was sterile, and yet at 3.8 billion years ago, metabolically complex life suddenly appeared! Paleontologist Peter Ward, an adamant evolutionist, observes:

“Ancient life existed ... as early as 3.8 billion years ago, it leads to a striking conclusion: Life seems to have appeared simultaneously with the cessation of the heavy bombardment ... This seems like an awfully short period of time for the first life to evolve.”⁵⁷

Even though this first life was morphologically simple (tiny one-celled organisms), it was metabolically complex, having the biochemical machinery for photosynthesis or chemoautotrophic processes, protein synthesis, capacity to produce amino acids, nucleotides, fatty acids, and sugars, and an ability to reproduce.⁵⁸ This metabolic complexity poses an extremely strong OEC apologetic argument for the Creator. Fast-forwarding to 543 million years ago, complex life-forms suddenly appeared during the “Cambrian Explosion.” This is another strong OEC apologetic argument. In what is termed “paleontology’s big bang,” a multitude of complex life-forms abruptly appeared on earth. How do evolutionists react? They have no explanation, as can be seen in their comments:

- “It remains true, as every paleontologist knows, that most new species, genera, and families and nearly all new categories above the level of families appear in the [fossil] record suddenly and are not led up to by know, gradual, completely continuous transitional sequences.”⁵⁹
- “Unfortunately, the origins of most higher categories are shrouded in mystery; commonly new higher categories appear abruptly in the fossil record without evidence of transitional forms.”⁶⁰

The increased morphological, biochemical, and informational complexity of Cambrian life-forms in “paleontology’s big bang” speaks volumes about a supernatural

Apologetic TOOLS

Creation Update Webcast

Join Hugh Ross and Fuz Rana each Tuesday, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM (PT), for webcast about how science agrees with the Bible. Listen live and/or download past broadcasts. Go to the RTB website and click on “Get Tuned In.”



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Designer. The Cambrian Explosion is a wonderful apologetic argument for Christians.

One concluding comment on the failure of evolution: the missing transitional forms in the fossil record, the origin of life with its incredible metabolic complexity, and the highly complex specified information encoded into DNA have led many in the scientific community to conclude that life could not have evolved on planet Earth. In frustration and desperation to preserve their naturalistic worldview, some now conclude that life must have originated elsewhere in the cosmos. The big push in astrobiology and emphasis on “panspermia” are admissions of the abject failure of “molecules to monkey to man” macroevolution that so pervades our society.

The Third Bara

God created (bara) man in His own image, in the image of God He created him. (Genesis 1:27, NASB)

Evolutionists believe modern man evolved from lower bi-pedal primates they call hominids. Many in the young-earth community express skepticism over the very existence of hominids, since “Pilt-down Man” and “Nebraska Man, initially touted as intermediates in “monkey to man” evolution, were later found to be fraudulent. Pre-human hominids did exist, however. Over 400 Neanderthal skeletal remains have been discovered since their initial discovery in 1856.

OEC regards these hominids as earlier creations of God. They were primates and animals, they were not human beings. When God created Adam & Eve, He created them “in His own image” and breathed something of His own Spirit into them (Genesis 2:7). Adam’s inward makeup of soul and spirit are of major importance.

For years, evolutionists claimed modern man (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) evolved from earlier bi-pedal primates, most particularly *Homo erectus* and Neanderthal. However, molecular anthropologists studying Y-chromosomal DNA sequences of modern humans have discovered a significant divide (60,000 to 70,000 years wide) between pre-existing bipedal primates and human beings. This break in the fossil record comports with genetic evidence that indirectly severs the genetic (and hence evolutionary) link between *H. erectus* and humans.⁶¹ Similar work comparing human and Neanderthal DNA has been conducted, with results suggesting Neanderthals did not make any genetic (and hence evolutionary) contribution to humanity.⁶²

In the late 1980s, mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) studies enabled biochemists to trace the origins of humanity back to one woman from a single location (mtDNA is passed from mother to child). Paleontologists have named this female “mitochondrial Eve.”⁶³ Later Y-chromosomal studies traced humanity’s male lineage to one location and a small population (Y-chromosomes are passed from father to son). Another study placed the date of the first male between 35,000 and 47,000 years ago.⁶⁴ Scientists refer to this as “Y-chromosome Adam.”

OECs believe genetic studies lend credence to mankind’s unique

creation, while YECs fallaciously claim that Neanderthals descended from Adam. Research severs the connection between modern man and earlier bi-pedal primates like Neanderthals and supports the Biblical creation account of Adam and his descendents. Further, it serves as a powerful apologetic for the Biblical creation of man.

DEATH BEFORE THE FALL

Of all the conflicting issues between YEC and OEC, none is more contentious than the issue of animal death before the Fall. The YEC view is Adam’s sin caused *all* death, both animal death and human death, and that prior to the Fall, there was no death, disease, or suffering. In fact, the idea that animal death occurred for long ages prior to Adam is viewed by YEC as unbiblical. Young-earth apologist Henry Morris writes, “The Bible is quite explicit in teaching that there was no suffering or death of sentient life in the world before man brought sin into the world.”⁶⁵

The OEC view is Adam’s sin caused the *spiritual* death of Adam (followed eventually by his physical death), but the Fall was not the cause of animal death. Death of animals was simply part of God’s created natural order and His plan to nourish His creatures and institute a balanced ecology. Pre-Adamic animal death is most certainly not related to salvation or the atonement. Old earth creationists support this position exegetically. It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a complete review of verses that support the OEC view, however, here are some of the more significant ones.

Genesis 2:16-17

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.”

God warned Adam that he would die. There is no suggestion of animal death, just human death. Both YECs and OECs are in agreement that the death imposed was spiritual death. John MacArthur (YEC) writes, “Spiritually, our first parents did die in the very same day they partook of the forbidden fruit. But physically, their lives were graciously prolonged.”⁶⁶ Gleason Archer (OEC) writes, “The death that overtook the guilty pair that day was spiritual only; physical death did not come until centuries later ... They were plunged immediately into a state of spiritual death.”⁶⁷

Romans 5:12

... just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

YECs often abbreviate Romans 5:12 as follows: “Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin.” Failure to include the rest of the verse opens the door to faulty exegesis—the inclusion of animal death, which is not within the context of the complete verse.

The verse states death entered the “world,” *kosmos* in the Greek. The

preferred definition of *kosmos* in this verse is “human race, mankind,” as in John 3:16. If Paul had intended “world” to mean the entire universe, the Greek word *ktisis* would have been used.⁶⁸ The verse also states that death came to all “men” (*anthropos*), because all sinned. Clearly, death came to mankind (*anthropos*) because of man’s sin. Man sinned; man paid the penalty. Animal death is neither mentioned nor inferred. Note the comments made by respected theologians on this issue:

- Louis Berkof (YEC) on animal death: “All of this does not mean, however, that there may not have been death in some sense of the word in the lower creation apart from sin . . .”⁶⁹
- James Montgomery Boice (OEC) referring to Romans 5:12: “But this [death] does not really pertain to the animal realm, in that animals do not have God-consciousness ... [It] is conceivable that animals could be created to enjoy a normal lifespan and then to die without having any of the judgmental qualities death has for man.”⁷⁰

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive.

Human (*anthropos*) death came by Adam. Through Christ “all” (that is, all mankind) will be made alive—not animals! The context deals with human death and human resurrection. Again, no animal death is mentioned or inferred.

Psalm 104:20-24

The beasts of the forest prowl about. The young lions roar after their prey and seek their food from God . . . In wisdom You have created them all. . .

In this creation Psalm, God’s plan for nourishing His creatures through animal predation is extolled in Scripture. As Augustine observes: “One might ask why brute beasts inflict injury on one another, for there is no sin in them for which they could be a punishment ... The answer, of course, is that one animal is the nourishment of another. To wish that it were otherwise would not be reasonable.”⁷¹

Job 38:39-41 and 39:27-30

Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, when they crouch in their dens and lie in wait in their lair? ... The eagle mounts up and makes a nest on high ... Spies out food; His eyes see from afar. His young ones also suck up blood; And where the slain are, there is he.

Again, animal predation and death are part of God’s plan for nature. In fact, in Adam’s naming of the animals (Genesis 1:20), the names Adam selected clearly suggest he was aware that certain animals killed other animals for food. For example, the Hebrew word for “lion” (Strong’s number H738) means “in the sense of violence.” “Cormorant” (H7994) means “bird of prey.” “Hawk” (H5322) means “unclean

bird of prey.” “Eagle” (H5404) means “to lacerate.” “Owl” (H8464) means “do violence to.”

Genesis 1:31

And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

When God saw all He had made and proclaimed it was “very good,” those in the young earth community immediately focus on one issue and one issue only—animal death and suffering. They ask, “How could God’s creation be ‘very good’ with millions of years of animal death?” As noted above, Scripture does not associate animal death with the Fall (Genesis 2:16-17, Romans 5:12, 1Corinthians 15:21-22). Thus, the YEC interpretation that “it was very good” implies “no animal death” seems unjustified.

When God looked out over creation, what could He have been thinking when He declared it “very good”? How about the magnificent universe that He created ex nihilo? How about planet Earth with its abundance of water and natural resources? What about all of the unique and wonderful animal life He created? How about His “crown jewel,” mankind, with whom He now could have a relationship?

When God looked out over the totality of His creation, He was pleased and declared it “very good”! God had created the perfect environment to accomplish His purposes. Animals were never intended to live forever, and Adam and Eve were only granted temporary immortality through the tree of life. Indeed, this whole creation will some day “pass away with a roar” (2 Peter 3:10), and we will be given a new eternal home (Revelation 21:1). Within the context of a temporal creation, it was, indeed, “very good.”

FLOOD GEOLOGY

This section, “Flood Geology,” and the following one, “Appearance of Age,” are included in this paper to help differentiate between young-earth and old-earth beliefs. Both concepts are accepted as true by YEC and rejected as false by OEC.

Note that the Noahaic Flood and Flood Geology are two separate but related issues. The intent of this paper is not to review the details of Noah’s Flood. Suffice to say both YEC and OEC believe the Flood was a real historical event that resulted in the universal destruction of all mankind living at that time, with the exception of Noah and his family. Flood geology is a separate and distinct issue.

Basics of Flood Geology

One of the primary precepts held by contemporary young-earth believers is flood geology. Flood geology is not a longstanding, traditional view, but a fairly recent concept that originated in the mid-to-late-1800s. Also known as “neo-catastrophism,” flood geology posits that nearly all geologic formations on earth resulted from the Noahaic Flood, characterized as a global deluge about 4,500 years

ago. In the YEC view, the Flood accounts for:

- Sea shells and marine fossils on mountain tops.
- The geologic column and all sedimentary rock formation, including the fossil record
- The formation of coal, oil, and diamonds
- Mountain-building: Flood geology purports that prior to the Flood, the earth was relatively flat, and it was only during and immediately after the Flood that mountains grew to their present state.
- The configuration of continents on earth today. Some YECs support the idea that “catastrophic plate tectonics” and “rapid continental drift” during the Flood were responsible for the transformation of Pangaea, the one single landmass on early Earth, into today’s continents. Answers in Genesis, one of the popular YEC organizations, states “continents moved apart during the Flood of Noah ... moved quickly over months, not slowly over millions of years.”⁷²

The problem, however, is there is neither scientific proof nor Scriptural evidence to justify any of these claims.

Origin and History of Flood Geology

The concept of flood geology originated with Ellen G. White (1827-1915), prophetess and founder of the Seventh Day Adventist movement. In trance-like visions, she claimed to receive divine messages and to have actually witnessed the six-day creation. White claimed she was “carried back to the creation and was shown that the first week, in which God performed the work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh day, was just like every other week.”⁷³ White taught “Noah’s flood had sculpted the surface of the earth, burying the plants and animals found in the fossil record.”⁷⁴ As historian Ronald Numbers writes, “It’s an intriguing and somewhat sorry tale of how the ideas of a mid 19th century founder and self-styled prophetess of Seventh Day Adventism (Ellen G. White) came to be so influential in orthodox Christian circles.”⁷⁵

Succeeding White was George McCready Price, a scientifically self-taught Seventh Day Adventist, who dedicated his life to the scientific defense of White’s version of earth history. Price, an arm-chair geologist with little formal science training and almost no geological field experience, was the first to coin the term “flood geology.” In 1923, Price published *The New Geology*, which argued “a simple and literal reading of early Genesis showed that God had created the world six to eight thousand years ago and had used the Flood to construct the planet’s geological past.”⁷⁶ At the time of publication, Price’s ideas were not taken seriously by professional geologists and had little impact outside of Adventist circles.

In the 1960s, the mantle of flood geology passed from Ellen G. White and George McCready Price to Henry Morris and John Whitcomb. Like

Price, neither Morris nor Whitcomb had professional degrees in geology. *The Genesis Flood*, written by Whitcomb and Morris, was an updating of Price’s work, which some regarded as “little more than Price’s shelf-worn flood geology, neatly repackaged for the discerning evangelical of the 1960s.”⁷⁷ It was through this book, which was actively promoted to hundreds of churches, Bible colleges, and seminaries in the 1960s and 1970s from Whitcomb’s academic base at Grace Theological Seminary, that flood geology became a bedrock of the young-earth view.

Problems with Flood Geology

Many who embrace YEC have never confronted the plethora of problems associated with flood geology. Many geological features of earth fail the test of the YEC flood-geology model. Geochemist W.U. Ault writes, “The serious Bible student will not seek to support the physical aspects of Bible history with pseudo-science.”⁷⁸ Very briefly, here are just three difficulties (out of hundreds) that pose credibility problems for flood geology and a young earth:

- The Green River formation (Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming) is 2,500 feet thick, and consists of 7.5 million “varves” (couplets of distinct, paper-thin, bi-layered sediment layers of silt and clay particles deposited annually in ancient lake beds). Each layer must remain undisturbed by moving water until lithified (hardened). Immediately below this 2,500 foot thick formation are fossilized bird prints, feces, and shells. Even further below are 25,000 feet of sedimentary rock.⁷⁹

Keep in mind, according to YEC Henry Morris, the Genesis Flood was characterized by “erupting reservoirs from the depths,” “violent tidal actions,” and “rising mountains, sinking basins, and other non-tranquil phenomena.”⁸⁰ It is obviously impossible for 7.5 million delicate and distinct “paper-thin, bi-layered sediment layers” to have been deposited during a flood with “erupting reservoirs and violent tidal actions,” let alone be distinctly separated from the 25,000 feet of sedimentary rock resting below the formation.

A further question arises: How did animal footprints form and get preserved in layer after layer of sedimentary rock, which supposedly formed from a soupy slurry of sediments during the Flood?

- Corals are microscopic marine animals that live in colonies on a reef. They excrete calcium carbonate to build shells, which is converted to limestone. A coral reef is formed of dead coral skeletons, in a deposition process that grows approximately 1 to 5 millimeters per year. Coral reefs are fragile ecosystems, which are destroyed by floods. The Capitan coral reef is 1,000 feet thick and is sandwiched in-between thousands of feet of sedimentary rock above it, and thousands of feet of sedimentary rock below it.⁸¹ A chaotic and violent flood cannot account for such formations.

- James Boice writes, “Throughout the world there are places where molten lava, called magma, has pushed itself up between various layers of fossil-bearing rock and has then been covered over by more fossil-bearing rock ... According to flood geology, the first fossil-bearing rock would have had to have been laid down during the early stages of the flood, after which the lava would have disturbed the layers and then hardened and eventually been covered over with more fossil-bearing material—all during the flood year. The difficulty, however, is that lava does not cool as quickly as this particular sequence of events would require ... estimates for the cooling of the Muskox intrusion in western Canada is 7,000 years, for the Stillwater intrusion in Montana 50,000 years, and for the Bushveld complex in South Africa 200,000 years.”⁸² The cooling of these massively thick lava flows follow basic thermodynamic laws of physics and take many thousands of years to cool—not just one.

Many conservative Bible scholars reject Flood Geology. One such scholar, Wayne Grudem, states:

“[I] am not persuaded that all of the earth’s geological formations were caused by Noah’s flood rather than by millions of years of sedimentation, volcanic eruptions, movement of glaciers, continental drift, and so forth. The controversy over flood geology is strikingly different from the other areas of dispute regarding creation, for its advocates have persuaded almost no professional geologists, even those who are Bible-believing evangelical Christians.”⁸³

On a similar note, James Boice, a staunch defender of Biblical inerrancy, makes a more general comment regarding the young-earth creation model:

“But when everything considered, it seems to many persons (myself included) that the [young earth] creationists are running against too many lines of more or less independent evidence against their case on behalf of a young earth. Therefore, whatever else may be true about their viewpoint, it is hard to believe that the creation of the earth and universe was recent.”⁸⁴

APPEARANCE OF AGE

Multiple evidences demonstrate God’s creation is very old. Not only do rock formations on earth prove an ancient earth, but rocks from the moon and Mars likewise date back billions of years. As previously mentioned, large rock formations on earth, having once been molten, would not have had sufficient time to cool if earth were only thousands of years old.⁸⁵ Also, “the planets of our solar system have numerous craters, in various stages of erosion, sometimes overlapping one another, which testify to a period of several billions years.”⁸⁶

To circumvent the plethora of evidences for an old earth and an

ancient creation, YECs argue for “appearance of age,” a theory which posits that many aspects of God’s creation only appear to be old, but really are quite young. Young earth creationists apply the “appearance of age” to the geologic column and fossil record in earth’s crust, natural resources (diamonds and coal, oil, & gas deposits), and the universe. Anything that appears older than 6,000 to 10,000 years is labeled as having been created by God with the “appearance of age.”

Origins and History

Many Christians believe “appearance of age” is a long-standing, traditional, orthodox teaching. It is not. The concept of “appearance of age” originated just 150 years ago by Philip Gosse, a British biologist who was also a preacher. As a scientist, he recognized that compelling data from geology and paleontology firmly established a very old earth, but as a preacher he felt constrained to uphold the Ussher date of creation of 4004 BC. To accommodate both views, Gosse proposed that God might have created the earth with the “appearance of age,” and in 1857 published a book, *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot*, introducing his new theory.^{87,88} Gosse’s hypothesis struck a sour note with many fellow Christians and his theory of “appearance of age” was soon rejected.

When originally formulated, the “appearance of age” proposition held dinosaurs had never lived, but that God had put fossils in the ground to test our faith and make the earth appear “mature.” In the late 1960s, Gosse’s “appearance of age” was dusted off, revived, and expanded to include the universe, since 20th century cosmology had clearly established a very old date for the creation of the universe. Gary North (YEC) suggested the creation had to be young to fit the 6,000 year creation interpretation, and therefore, aspects of the universe must be illusory. According to North:

“The Bible’s account of the chronology of creation [Ussher’s 4004BC] points to an illusion ... The seeming age of the stars is an illusion ... Either the constancy of the speed of light is an illusion, or the size of the universe is an illusion ... ”⁸⁹

God’s Creation – Factual or Fictional?

Realizing that light from distant stars would take millions or billions of light-years to reach a 6,000 year old earth, many in the YEC camp theorize God created light from stars mid-flight. However, this conflicts with factual historical astronomical events. For instance, in 1604 Galileo observed a supernova (bright light from an exploding star).⁹⁰ In 1987 another supernova was observed hundreds of thousands of light years away. If God created the light in-transit, then what was observed in 1604 and 1987, in real time, never really occurred. God just made it appear like it happened by placing light waves in space so that they arrived here in 1604 and 1987. So are the supernovas just an illusion? This YEC theory requires that God simulated events that never happened—that God created fictitious history (much like the story of fossils from dinosaurs that had never lived). Should a Christian believe God’s creation would in any way be deceptive? No!

Unlike false religions, Christianity is based on history and evidence. Romans 1:20 states that God's eternal power and divine nature can be clearly seen and understood through what has been made. The "appearance of age" proposition seems to contradict that simple truth. There is a certain irony when those who embrace the "appearance of age" also believe the heavens declare the glory of the God of Truth. Our faith has a foundation based on factual reality, not fiction.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

It is particularly important to provide our young people with the best possible reasons for the God of the Bible before they "leave the nest" and enroll at "Liberal U". It is well recognized that a significant percentage of evangelical youth depart from the faith during college. As Dr. William Dembski, a leader in the intelligent design movement, noted, "Professor Will Provine teaches a course for incoming freshman at Cornell University. In it, he contends that Darwin's theory of evolution makes it impossible to believe in the existence of a benevolent God, much less in the God of Christianity. Provine informs his students that by the end of the course any belief they have in God will be shattered. In fact, he gauges the success of the course by the number of new atheists it produces."⁹¹

The tragic irony of much young-earth science teaching is that it may actually lay a foundation for eventual rejection of the faith. After entering college and being confronted with the mountain of rigorously-tested evidence for an ancient earth, the student who has been taught "young-earth science" may be confused and develop doubts about more important faith issues. Unable to resolve the apparent contradictions between mainstream science and young-earth science, young Christians may find themselves at a worldviews crossroads and begin to question the very foundations of their faith.

Likewise, in church outreach, interfacing with the secular post-modern culture is a challenge. Christians need to be provided with all available apologetic tools to meet the challenge. To unbelievers, a creation 6,000 to 10,000 years ago is regarded as "myth," and if Genesis 1:1 is fiction, then so is John 3:16. Unbelieving skeptics will reject the Bible as just containing myths and fables. Further, insistence on creation being performed in six 24-hour days sets an unnecessary stumbling block in the path of seekers.

Christians need to be familiar with all sides of the creationist argument—both young earth *and* old earth—and also need to be aware of drawbacks associated with young earth creationism, some of which are spelled out below.

- "Many non-Christians are driven away from the God of the Bible by the young-earth claims which are, frankly, ridiculous to most people who love science. It is a shame that people who love science, who would like to know the One who created the universe, reject, out of hand the Christian God, because they see Christianity as so unscientific."⁹² (Christian professor)

- "When the 'young earth' creationist insists that the biblical evidence indicates an earth of only 6 to 10 thousand years old, all communication bridges to the secular science community break down. The communication gap widens and such reactionary creationist views are labeled 'folk science.' The scriptures and the gospel are consequently dismissed as meaningless."⁹³ (Christian missionary)
- "The worst aspect of young-earth creationists' teaching is that it creates a nearly insurmountable barrier between the educated world and the church ... how many more have not accepted the Gospel because of the unnecessary demand that converts believe that the world is no more than 10,000 years old?"⁹⁴ (Former young earth creationist)
- Augustine, in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* wrote: "Usually, even a non-Christian knows something about the earth, the heavens, and the other elements of this world, about the motion and orbit of the stars and even their size and relative positions, about the predictable eclipses of the sun and moon, the cycles of the years and seasons, about the kinds of animals, shrubs, stones, and so forth, and this knowledge he holds to as being certain from reason and experience. Now, it is a disgraceful and dangerous thing for an infidel to hear a Christian, presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talking nonsense on these topics; and we should take all means to prevent such an embarrassing situation, in which people show up vast ignorance in a Christian and laugh it to scorn. The shame is not so much that an ignorant individual is derided, but that people outside the household of the faith think our sacred writers held such opinions, and, to the great loss of those for whose salvation we toil, the writers of our Scripture are criticized and rejected as unlearned men.... Reckless and incompetent expounders of Holy Scripture bring untold trouble and sorrow on their wiser brethren when they are caught in one of their mischievous false opinions and are taken to task by these who are not bound by the authority of our sacred books. For then, to defend their utterly foolish and obviously untrue statements, they will try to call upon Holy Scripture for proof and even recite from memory many passages which they think support their position, although they understand neither what they say nor the things about which they make assertion."⁹⁵

There are many Godly Christians on both sides of the young-earth/old-earth debate. Nearly all agree the age-of-the-earth is not a bedrock doctrinal issue. Exegetical arguments can be brought to bear that support both viewpoints. In terms of scientific arguments, however, the evidence clearly and overwhelmingly supports the old-earth view. John Mark Reynolds and Paul Nelson acknowledge, "Recent creationists [YEC] should humbly agree that their view is, at the moment, implausible on purely scientific grounds."⁹⁶

Walter Kaiser suggests the age-of-the-earth issue is not a basis for breaking fellowship or a test of doctrinal purity: "It is a secondary issue to our Lord and should be to us."⁹⁷ However, while it is a secondary doctrinal issue for believers, it may actually be a salvation issue to non-believers who reject Christianity based on a young-earth interpretation of Genesis 1. In contrast, when a non-believer views Genesis 1-2 through the lens of OEC, even the most ardent secular scientist is drawn to wonder about supernatural causation:

"From my earliest training as a scientist, I was very strongly brainwashed to believe that science cannot be consistent with any kind of deliberate creation. That notion has had to be painfully shed. ... At the moment, I can't find any rational argument to knock down the view which argues for conversion to God ... We used to have an open mind; now we realize that the only logical answer to life is creation and not accidental, random shuffling."⁹⁸

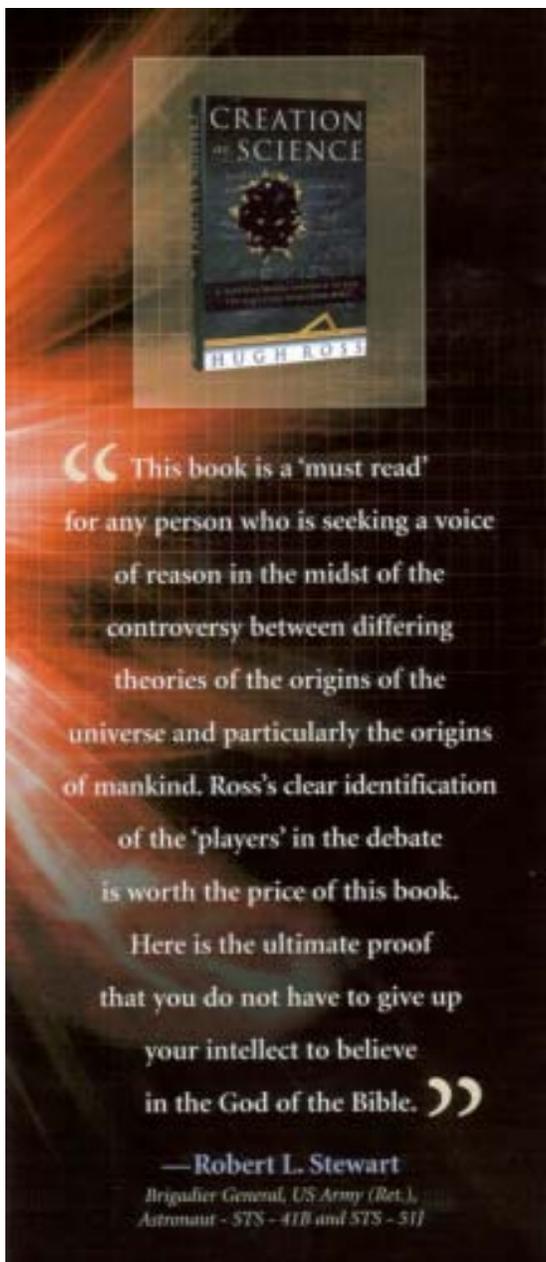
When the Genesis creation account is understood as an ancient event, there is harmony between God's Word the record of nature. Mainstream science now acknowledges the ex nihilo beginning of the universe billions of years ago and marvel in it. Similarly, recent findings in biochemistry and paleontology lend credence to supernatural creation of life and seriously challenge the naturalistic worldview. Old Earth Creationism has a long and rich history, supported by noteworthy theologians and scholars, and warrants serious consideration by conservative evangelicals and apologists who wish to be a light to an unbelieving and skeptical world.

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Seattle Chapter Reasons To Believe

Who Are We?

The Seattle Chapter of Reasons To Believe is a local extension of the worldwide, interdenominational Reasons To Believe ministry. We exist to support our parent organization and foster local involvement in the ministry. We serve the Puget Sound area and are composed of Christians of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction that the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, what God says through His word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinism and young-Earth creationism.

What Do We Do?

Our mission is to remove the doubts of skeptics and strengthen the faith of believers. We provide scientific, historical and philosophical evidence that supports the Christian worldview and helps remove barriers to a belief in God, the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission by:

- Helping people access RTB and other scientifically and biblically sound resources.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Assembling a team of local apologists to address questions about science, the Bible and related topics.
- Working with teachers and homeschoolers to achieve a balanced approach to the teaching of origins.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of the RTB ministry.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, encouraging them to evaluate their worldviews.

We welcome your involvement and support. For more information, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Seattle RTB, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683.

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