



What's Happening?

The Seattle Chapter's *Sound Reasons* meetings have been a big hit, both in terms of the subject matter and the opportunity to fellowship with local RTB supporters. This series will resume in the fall. If you have suggestions on future topics please contact us at seattle@reasons.org.

We are also continuing to explore the possibility of bringing Hugh Ross or another RTB scholar to the area sometime later this year. We are particularly interested in hosting forums for young adults. If you are involved with a local college and might be interested helping to organize an event, please contact us.

In the meantime, we encourage you to continue checking the RTB website for new resources (www.reasons.org). Fuz Rana has published a new book, *Creating Life in the Lab*, and there is a large and growing collection of podcasts available for download. For those interested in apologist training, check out the courses offered by RTB's Reasons Institute.

As always, we welcome your questions and comments. Contact us at seattle@reasons.org or our new facebook page,  RTB Puget Sound.

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The Biblical Case for Old-Earth Creationism (Part 2)

By Jon W. Greene

AGE OF THE EARTH

Philosopher and theologian Augustine of Hippo believed that science could not contradict orthodox Christianity because the Creator God and the Redeemer God are one. Truth cannot contradict truth.

Progressive creationists accept the geological and cosmological estimates of a 4.5 billion year old earth. Scripture speaks not of a young earth or an old earth, but an ancient earth: "Hear O mountains . . . you everlasting foundations of the earth" (Micah 6:2). "The ancient mountains crumbled, and the age-old hills collapsed" (Habakkuk 3:6).



As knowledge has advanced, multiple independent evidences confirm an old earth, including 40 different methods of radiometric dating, plus numerous non-radiometric measurements. For example, ice core samples from Antarctica and Greenland provide an unbroken record of annual ice layers spanning the past 800,000 years. Annual tree ring records provide a continuous record of the past 15,000 years. Coral reefs record long ages of growth (Eniwetok Reef 140,000 years, Grand Bahama Reef 790,000 years). Ancient annual lake varve sediments provide evidence of earth's history dating back 15 to 20 million years.³⁵

It is important to consider these findings objectively. Augustine presciently wrote, "In matters that are obscure and far beyond our vision, even in such as we may find treated in Holy Scripture, different interpretations are sometimes possible without prejudice to the faith we have received. In such a case, we should not rush in headlong and so firmly take our stand on one side that, if further progress in the search of truth justly undermines this position, we too fall with it."³⁶

This is what happened with Copernicus and Galileo who were castigated by the Church for advocating the cosmological theory of heliocentrism (earth revolving around the sun), which the Church

deemed contrary to their geocentric (sun revolving around the earth) understanding of Scripture (Psalm 93:1, Psalm 104:5, Ecclesiastes 1:5). However, scientific discovery helped clarify Scripture and prompted correction of a faulty interpretation.

Young-earth believers attribute virtually all of earth's geologic characteristics to catastrophic processes that occurred during the Flood of Noah. OECs believe earth's surface was formed through both rapid catastrophic processes (earthquakes, flash floods) and slow processes (plate tectonics; mountain building; formation of coal, oil, & diamonds; coral reef formation, etc). OECs believe in the Noahic Flood and God's judgment on sinful man, but reject YEC "flood geology." (For those interested, the history of "flood geology" is an fascinating tale, which first originated in the mid-1800s through the "divine visions" of Ellen G. White, prophetess and founder of the Seventh Day Adventist movement.³⁷)

The truth is that many geological features of earth simply do not support the YEC flood-geology model. Christian geochemist W.U. Ault writes, "The serious Bible student will not seek to support the physical aspects of Bible history with pseudo-science."³⁸ Conservative theologian Wayne Grudem comments: "[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 . . . its advocates have persuaded almost no professional geologists, even those who are Bible-believing evangelical Christians."³⁹

OECs also reject the concept of "appearance of age," which posits God created an earth that only appears old. The "appearance of age" theory was first conceived by Philip H. Gosse in 1857. It was rejected in Gosse's day, but was once again resurrected by John Whitcomb in 1961. Theologian Wayne Grudem asks, "Why would God create so many different indications of an earth that is 4.5 billion years old if this were not true?" Hebrews 6:18 states, "It is impossible for God to lie." It is not in God's nature to create something young, and then fallaciously give it the appearance of age. Romans 1:19-20 states, "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."

In the final analysis, it seems contrary to God's nature to create a young earth and give it an artificial appearance of old age.

CREATION OF LIFE AND MANKIND

Progressive creationists believe God created all life. He created the earliest primitive micro-organisms on earth approximately 3.8 billion years ago and continued to create life through the "days" of creation (long epochs of time), including all plant life, sea and flying creatures, land animals including primitive bipedal primates, and finally humanity's actual historical parents, Adam and Eve, God's "crown-jewel" of creation, made in His image (*Imago Dei*).

Comparing young-earth and old-earth views on God's creation of plant-life reveals significantly different interpretations of Scripture. The young-earth view is well stated by John MacArthur: "He

Bible & Science In the News

■ Your \$45,000 eyes

In this RTB article, Dr. Curt Deckert compares the human eye to one of the best cameras available: the \$45,000 200-megapixel Hasselblad. Many evolutionists have criticized the eye's design. However, he shows that the eye not only out-performs the Hasselblad, but does it in 3D. Go to [www.reasons.org/your-\\$45,000-eyes#](http://www.reasons.org/your-$45,000-eyes#).

■ The Lost Codices

This *tothesource* discusses the recently publicized lead codices claimed to be some of the earliest Christian documents found. Apparently, the academic community is divided on the authenticity of the texts and only time will tell if they are genuine artifacts or simply sophisticated forgeries. Go to: www.tothesource.org/7_13_2011/7_13_2011.htm.

■ Sex and Evolution

This Evolution News article discusses why the origin of sex from asexual organisms is a profound problem for evolution. He reviews a number of attempted solutions at the problem and concludes that evolutionary solutions are doomed to failure. Go to http://www.evolutionnews.org/2011/07/spinning_fanciful_tales_about_048281.html.

■ The End of Morality?

This *tothesource* article discusses a report in *Discover* magazine about an experiment from which cognitive researchers have concluded that what we call God-given conscience is merely a reaction hard-wired into the brain by evolution. It is foolish, he states, to correlate MRI data with moral reasoning. Go to www.tothesource.org/4_15_2009/4_15_2009.htm.

■ Are We Alone?

This Space.com article discusses a new analysis of the Drake Equation. In their paper, the researchers show the inputs scientists use in the equation overstate the possibility of other civilizations in the universe and conclude there's no reason to believe we aren't alone. Go to: <http://www.space.com/12421-alien-life-rare-universe-extraterrestrials-seti.html>.

created them as fully mature, fully developed . . . He did not create just seeds and cells . . . He made trees with already-mature fruit . . . The garden itself was created mature, fully functional, and therefore with the appearance of age."⁴⁰ But what does Genesis 1:11-12 say?

And God said, "Let the earth sprout (*dasha*) vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seeds in them, on the earth," and it was so. The earth brought forth (*yatsa'*) vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is there seed, each according to its kind.

The old-earth interpretation differs in several important ways. First, the old-earth view posits the sun is already present, having been created "in the beginning," as part of "the heavens and the earth" (*ha'shamayim we ha'erets*), as opposed to the young-earth view in which the sun is not created until the fourth day of creation (the day following the creation of plant life). Second, Genesis 1:11 does not literally say that God created vegetation and trees fully formed. Rather, it says that God commanded the earth to *sprout* vegetation and trees. The Hebrew word translated "sprout" (*dasha*) means "to cause to sprout or shoot forth," and "brought forth" (*yatsa'*) means to "come out or go forth." There is no mandate that God created fully-formed plants and fruit trees. Third, the Hebrew phrase translated "and it was so" in Genesis 1:3-31 merely indicates the *completion* of God's commands. (It is the *waw-consecutive* form of the imperfect verb "to be" and has the *completed action* meaning.) This phrase does not mean that the command was achieved immediately. It only indicates *completed action*, but not *when* the action was completed.⁴¹ "And it was so" means God's command, "the sprouting of vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit," was fully completed. These completed processes (plants yielding seed and trees bearing fruit) require seasons and years, not just 24-hours. The textual evidence, therefore, seems to favor an extended time-period interpretation.

Regarding creation of animal life, origin-of-life researchers are still stumped in their quest to find unguided naturalistic processes necessary for bringing life from non-life, since even the simplest primitive organism is unimaginably complex. Francis Crick, co-discoverer of DNA, comments, "An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to almost be a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going."⁴²

With respect to mankind, as noted earlier, the Genesis genealogies do not define the exact date of the creation of Adam and Eve. Whether humanity's parents were created less than 10,000 years ago (YEC view) or more than 10,000 years ago (OEC view), both OEC and YEC believe in the historical Fall of the historical Adam and Eve. They

were at the headwaters of the human race and the result of special creation.⁴³ In contrast, "Theistic Evolution" denies the historicity of Adam and Eve and the Fall. This has profound theological implications, because the Fall of our historical parents is inseparable from the origin of sin and the doctrine of redemption. If mankind did not fall in Adam, we cannot be redeemed in Christ.

A quick note from science: Recent mitochondrial DNA studies in human females and recent Y-chromosomal studies in males trace all human origins back to one woman and one man, who geneticists refer to as "Mitochondrial Eve" and "Y-chromosome Adam."⁴⁴

DARWINIAN EVOLUTION

Many in today's secular society believe that Darwinism has reduced the Bible to a foolish fairy tale. The "New Atheists" (Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Daniel Dennett) routinely denigrate Christians as being "flat-earthers who reject real science and believe in a 6,000 year old earth." Evolutionists incorrectly assume that an ancient universe makes Darwinism true, and YECs mistakenly assume that since OECs believe in an old earth, they also believe in evolution. Both assumptions are false.

Like young-earth advocates, progressive creationists accept "micro-evolution" (i.e., variation in bird beaks, development of bacterial resistance to antibiotics, minor changes within species, etc), but adamantly reject Darwinian "macro-evolution," that all life originated from primitive one-celled organisms that evolved by unguided naturalistic processes into the broad diversity of plants and animals that have populated planet earth.

Old-earth creationists believe God supernaturally created all life over long ages of time, allowing early species to die out and then create new species, "renewing the face of the ground" (Psalm 104:29-30). OECs accept the geologic record as an indication of the age of the earth, but contrary to evolutionists, believe the fossil record reflects God's creation of life rather than evolution. For example, during earth's geologic Cambrian Period (circa 530 million years ago), numerous complex life forms appeared *abruptly* in the fossil record with no prior historical traces. The sudden and simultaneous appearance of more than 70 complex animal phyla defies a naturalistic explanation.⁴⁵

Complex Cambrian life-forms just suddenly appeared, in agreement with Genesis 1:20-23. Paleontologists refer to this as the "Cambrian Explosion." Harvard evolutionary paleontologist George Gaylord Simpson writes, "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 known, gradual, completely continuous transitional sequences."⁴⁶ The fossil record actually comports better with special creation

than Darwinian gradualism. Mathematician Granville Sewell writes, “[T]hose who claim that science has eliminated the supernatural from Nature have a view of science that has been out of date for 80 years.”⁴⁷

Further, OECs believe the irreducibly complex nanotechnology found in cells and the complex specified information present within protein molecules and DNA code *clearly and unequivocally point to an Intelligent Designer—God*. Renowned British Philosopher Antony Flew, a former atheist, writes, “It is impossible for evolution to account for the fact that one single cell can carry more data than all the volumes of the Encyclopedia Britannica.” Herbert Yockey, physicist and information theorist, states the universe is at least 10^{10,000,000,000} times too small or too young to permit life to be assembled by natural processes.⁴⁸ So whether planet Earth is 6,000 years old or 4.5 billion years old, it is still too young to generate life through naturalistic processes.

DEATH BEFORE THE FALL

While the no-animal-death-before-the-Fall doctrine is not found in any orthodox creedal statements, today’s young-earth leaders, such as Ken Ham and Kent Hovind, treat it as a defining issue of Christian orthodoxy. While YECs reject all death before the Fall, OECs believe animal death was part of God’s creation long before Adam was even created. The OEC view is that Adam’s sin caused his *spiritual* death, eventually followed by physical death, and that pre-Adamic animal death is not related to man’s salvation or Christ’s atoning work on the cross. Here is the Scriptural support for the old-earth position:

- In Genesis 2:17, God warned Adam in the garden, “for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.” There was no suggestion of animal death, just Adam’s death. Both John MacArthur (YEC) and Gleason Archer (OEC) agree this was *spiritual* death for Adam, followed hundreds of years later by Adam’s physical death.⁴⁹ Neither Adam nor Eve suffered physical death during that 24 hour day. After God’s warning, Adam fathered Seth after 130 years, followed by other sons and daughters, and then physically died having lived 930 years (Genesis 5:3-5).
- Romans 5:12 states that “sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin.” The Greek word used for “world,” *kosmos*, is the same word used in John 3:16, “for God so loved the world . . .” Though *kosmos* may mean “universe” or “earth,” perhaps the most appropriate meaning in context is “the inhabitants of earth, men, the human family” or “the ungodly multitude of men alienated from God.”⁵⁰ The verse continues, “death came to all *men (anthropos)*, because all *sinned*.” This makes it clear that death came to men. *Anthropos* specifically refers to human beings, not

animals.⁵¹ Only man sins, not animals. Animal death is neither mentioned nor inferred, and is excluded by Paul’s use of the word *anthropos*. Theologian Louis Berkof (YEC) writes, “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 . . .”⁵² James Montgomery Boice (OEC) echoes Berkof: “But this 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.”⁵³

- 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 is similarly used by YECs to suggest Adam’s sin brought about animal death: “For since by a man came death, by a man also came resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.” However, the context again is referring strictly to human beings with death being defeated through the resurrection of Christ. The passage states those who die are the same as those resurrected and made alive in Christ. “If ‘all’ that die in Adam includes animals, then the ‘all’ made alive by Christ must also include the animals. Certainly this is not the intent of the text, since no mention is made in the Scriptures suggesting the spiritual nature of animals, the moral capacity of animals, the need for animal redemption, nor the physical or spiritual resurrection of animals.”⁵⁴
- Job 38:39-41, 39:27-30, written prior to the Genesis creation account, describes animal predation and death as part of God’s creation: “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.”
- Adam named the animals *before the Fall* (Genesis 2:19-20). Though Adam obviously did not know Hebrew, the animal names chosen by the Divine Author suggest carnivorous activity. 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.” The selected animal names suggest that Adam, in his pre-fallen state, may have understood animal death and had likely even witnessed it.
- Psalm 104, a poetic parallel to Genesis 1, alludes to the creation and extinction of life over eons of time:

“When you hide your face, they are dismayed; When you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send forth your Spirit, they are created and you renew the face of the ground” (Psalm 104:29-30). Over time animals die, return to the dust, and are subsequently followed by new generations created by God.

The views of Ken Ham and today’s staunch young-earth believers regarding “death before the fall” fail to comport with some of history’s giants of the faith. Augustine did not consider animal death a direct result of the Fall. He wrote, “One might ask why brute beasts inflict injury on one another, for there is no sin in them for which this could be a punishment, and they cannot acquire any virtue by such a trial. The answer, of course, is that one animal is the nourishment of another. To wish that it were otherwise would not be reasonable.”⁵⁵

CONCLUDING THOUGHT

Reflecting on God’s days of creation, I conclude with the words of the late Gleason Archer, Hebrew linguist, Bible scholar, educator, author, and champion for biblical inerrancy. He wrote the following in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*:

“Moses never intended the creative days to be understood as a mere twenty-four hours in length, and the information he included in [Genesis] chapter 2 logically precludes us from doing so. It is only by a neglect of proper hermeneutical methods that this impression ever became prevalent among God’s people, during the post-biblical era. Entirely apart from any findings of modern science or challenges of contemporary scientism, the twenty-four hour theory was never correct and should never have been believed—except by those who are bent on proving the presence of genuine contradictions in Scripture . . . Who can calculate the large numbers of college students who have turned away from the Bible altogether by the false impression that it bounds the conscience of the believer to the 24-hour Day theory?”⁵⁶

[Part 1 of this article appeared in the June Seattle Chapter newsletter available at <http://www.reasons.org/get-involved/chapters-and-networks/seattle#newsletter>.]

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ENDNOTES

35. “Radiometric Dating: A Christian Perspective,” Roger C. Wiens, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/resources/wiens.html>; C. John Collins, *Science & Faith: Friends or Foes?* (2003), 249-250; “Reliability of

Radiometric Dating”, Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days* (2004), 175-184; William Newman, *Geologic Time* (U.S. Geological Survey, 1997), <http://pubs.usgs.gov/gip/geotime/contents.html>; Jeff Zweerink, “Ice Cores Reveal History,” www.reasons.org/ice-cores-reveal-history; “Geology and Creation Science,” www.answersincreation.org/geology.htm; *God’s Word, God’s World*, Patti Townley-Covert (Editor), RTB (2009), 32-26; “The Age of Coral Reefs,” www.asa3.org/asa/education/origins/coralreefs.htm; Davis A. Young and Ralph F. Stearly, *The Bible, Rocks and Time: The Geological Evidence for the Age of the Earth* (2008), 310.

36. St. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis, Volume 1*, John Hammond Taylor, Editor, (New York: Newman Press, 1982), 41.
37. Ellen G. White (1827-1915), prophetess and founder of the Seventh Day Adventist movement was the earliest proponent of “flood geology,” which came to her in “divine visions.” White’s disciple, George McCready Price (1870-1963), a scientifically self-taught armchair geologist, dedicated his life to the defense of White’s vision and was first to coin the term “flood geology.” Flood geology was rejected until the 1960s, when the mantle of flood geology was passed from Price to Henry Morris and John Whitcomb, neither of whom had professional degrees in geology. In 1961 they published *The Genesis Flood*, which turned innumerable Christians toward YEC. For additional information, see Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (1992), and J Greene, “A Brief History of Flood Geology,” <http://www.old.reasons.org/chapters/seattle/newsletters/200409/200409.pdf>.
38. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Volume 2, Merrill C. Tenney, Editor (1976), 563.
39. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, (1994), 273, 290-291.
40. John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning*, (W Publishing Group, 2001), 54-55.
41. Whitefield 71-72, 95. (Whitefield notes that the same consonantal phrase, “and it was so,” also appears in 2 Kings 15: 12, Judges 6:37-38, and Amos 5: 14. In all cases, completion of the action does not take place immediately, but takes place over extended periods of time.)
42. Francis Crick, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Crick
43. C. John Collins, “Adam and Eve as Historical People and Why It Matters,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, Volume 62, Number 3, September 2010.

44. Fazale Rana with Hugh Ross, *Who Was Adam?: A Creation Model Approach to the Origin of Man*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), 60-67.
45. Fazale Rana and Hugh Ross, *Origins of Life* (2004).
46. George Gaylord Simpson, *The Major Features of Evolution*, (1965), 360.
47. Granville Sewell, *In the Beginning and Other Essays on Intelligent Design*, (Seattle, WA: Discovery Institute Press, 2010), 115.
48. Herbert Yockey quoted in Hugh Ross, "Design and the Anthropic Principle," www.origins.org/articles/ross_designanthropic.html.
49. John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning* (2001), 217; Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (1982), 72-73.
50. www.searchgodsword.org (Romans 5:12)
51. Anthropos: "A human being. All human individuals. To distinguish man from beings of a different order" www.searchgodsword.org.
52. Louis Berkof, *Systematic Theology* (1941), 669-670.
53. James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis, Volume 1 - An Expository Commentary* (1998), 77.
54. Mark Whorton, *Peril in Paradise*, (Waynesbo, GA: Authentic Media, 2005), 186.
55. St. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis, Volume 1*, John Hammond Taylor, Editor (1982), 92.
56. Gleason Archer, quoted from "Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible," *International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, Summit II* (1982), Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Prues, Editors (1984), 329, 333-334.



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 and are composed of Christians of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, God's 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 and the Bible.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of RTB.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, to expose them to God's word.

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.

Questions? Get Answers.

If you're looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God, the Bible, and science, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. Or call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.