

Creationism: According to the Scriptures, the Earth is Young

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

The Bible begins with creation, and the fact that God is Creator is always in view from Genesis to Revelation. Even though the Bible is not primarily a book of science, it is as trustworthy in the area of science as when it speaks to any other subject. We can have confidence in what it says concerning the origin of all things because “all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is not the changing word of human beings, but the unchanging Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

“However, though the Bible’s message is timeless and unchanging (because the God who authored it is timeless and immutable); we must confess that our understanding of it as well as that of other Bible believing evangelicals, is limited. Our limited understanding of the Bible’s message is illustrated in the great divide that exists about the Bible’s message about the origin and age of the earth. While all orthodox evangelicals believe that God created the heavens and the earth; they do not agree about the methods or time He employed as the Creator. Some evangelicals believe that God used great amounts of time to create, while guiding the process (called Old Earth Creationists). Some others believe that God used macroevolution in creating (called Theistic Evolutionists). Old Earth Creationists and Theistic Evolutionists believe the earth is approximately 4.5 billion years old. Other evangelicals interpret Genesis in such a way that they are labeled Young Earth Creationists. Young Earth Creationists believe the earth is between 10,000 and 20,000 years old. As you can see, the divide is great (4,999,980,000 years).”

The pastors at Berean would be labeled Young Earth Evangelicals. We interpret Genesis 1 in the traditional way: God created the heavens and the earth in the course of six 24 hour days and then rested on the seventh day which he called the Sabbath. All teaching on the subject of creationism is to follow the Young Earth model. We make no apology for our interpretation or our teaching policy. However, we feel it necessary to must share that our differences with Old Earth Evangelicals are not as gigantic as some people would believe. Notice the following topics upon which we agree with our Old Age brethren.

The Bible Shows God as the Creator

Scripture focuses our attention not so much on the act of creation as on God himself as the Creator. In Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 God is the subject of most of the sentences. We read that God created, God said, God saw, God divided, God called or named, God made, God set or appointed, God blessed, God rested, and God sanctified.

Creation is the revelation of an intelligent, loving, personal and involved God. He made and sustains the universe (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16-17). The Scriptures revelation of God through the creation narrative contrasts radically with man originated views of deity and the universe. In contrast to pantheism He is distinct from His creation (Psalm 90:2). In contrast to deism He continues to be personally interested in His handiwork; for He upholds, sustains, and preserves it (Nehemiah 9:6).

The Biblical Account of Creation Reveals Progress and Climax

1 (e.g., Matthew 1:8-9, “the father of Jehosaphat, and Jehosaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz.” By comparing Matthew’s record with that of 1 Chronicles 3:10-12 we see that Matthew left out Joah, Amaziah, and Azariah).

Progress and a climax were a part of the biblical account of creation. Progress can be seen in the increase of personal attention God gave in His creative work. Of the vegetation we read that God said, “Let the land produce vegetation’ And it was so” (Genesis 1:11, 12). Of the animals we read that God said, “Let the land produce’ And it was so” (vv. 24, 25). But of the human race God said, “Let us make man. . . .’ So God created man...; male and female he created them” (vv. 26, 27). The human race is thus a special and distinctive creation, the climax, and to human beings is given dominion.

The Biblical Account Shows Distinct Steps of Creation

It is evident that God carried out His plan in distinct steps. This is indicated by the mention of succeeding days in Creation and by the mention of the evening and morning. That is, here is an evening, this part is over; here is a morning, a new beginning. Genesis 2, instead of being another creation record as some claim, is an amplification of activity not mentioned in Genesis 1. That is, the first chapter simply states that God created man, male and female created He them. The second chapter gives further details about part of the sixth creation day. There we see that God took the dust of the earth and formed Adam. Then He breathed into him the breath of life. This act indicates that humans are distinct from animals and that God did not form Adam from some previously existing animal (1 Corinthians 15:39). The creation of animal life from the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:19) only indicates that God used the same source of material for both.

It is also evident that no part of God’s creation, whether human, angel, or devil, is creative in the sense God is. The Hebrew word for create (*bara’*) always has God as the subject of the verb. This word is used for God’s work of creation and is also used to indicate that God would do something unusual and unprecedented.

God Had Purpose in Creation

God had purpose in creation. He created “for his own ends” or for His own pleasure (Proverbs 16:4; Revelation 4:11) and for His glory (Isaiah 43:7). He wanted the earth to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18). All creation is thus an expression of His will and His power.

Areas of Disagreement

Of course, the vast difference between earth age interpretation is rooted in some fundamental differences about how to interpret Genesis. Below are some areas of disagreement:

- The interpretation of the word “days”
- The time between the genealogical gaps in the Bible
 - Almost all evangelicals believe that genealogical gaps are found in the Bible¹. Evangelicals disagree about the length of time that such gaps represent.
- The age of the human race
 - Current scientific estimates say that man first appeared on earth about 2.5 million years ago. However, Carbon-14 dating puts Cro-Magnon man (the Homo Sapiens, Sapiens man) in Siberia at 9,000 B.C. which is 11,000 years ago. So we can be clear that man has been on the planet for at least 10,000 years; which fits very well with the Young Earth interpretation of the universe’s age.

¹ (e.g., Matthew 1:8-9, “the father of Jehosaphat, and Jehosaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz.” By comparing Matthew’s record with that of 1 Chronicles 3:10-12 we see that Matthew left out Joah, Amaziah, and Azariah).

- Is Genesis 1 to be interpreted according to metaphorical or literal methods? Believe it or not, this question doesn't really revolve around literal interpretation. Old Earth Evangelicals interpret Genesis 1 literally; their belief is that the concrete terms speak metaphorically to God's work.

Conclusion

The pastors are Young Earth Evangelicals. We do not apologize for our interpretive position but we do hold it humbly. Today, the scientific community and the evangelical community (whether it Young Earth or Old Earth) disagree. We believe in the end when all things are revealed there will be no disagreement in our understanding. God is the sole witness to creation. He has revealed to us that He made everything from nothing. Evangelicals continue to discuss how to understand what God said about His creative work; yet we do not debate with another about its true significance—there is a God to whom all men are accountable. We believe that Bereanites have two duties related to this subject:

1. Study and teach the young earth position but do it with a humble heart as all things are not yet known. Our posture to other believers with differing opinions should follow that of this old saying drawn from 17th century Germany.
 - a. "In necessariis unitas, in non-necessariis libertas, in utrisque caritas."

The English translation is, "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity." May this desire expressed over 400 years ago characterize our attitudes and actions.

2. Preach the gospel to the unsaved because they will stand before their Creator unprepared without Christ.

¹ (e.g., Matthew 1:8-9, "the father of Jehosaphat, and Jehosaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz." By comparing Matthew's record with that of 1 Chronicles 3:10-12 we see that Matthew left out Joah, Amaziah, and Azariah).