

Creation and the Age of the Earth

By Al Felder

“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.” (Heb. 1:10)

As we read the Bible it becomes very clear that everything that was made was made by God. The scriptures teach that in the beginning God created. Well, how long ago did everything begin? Does the Bible actually tell us the age of the earth and the universe? More importantly, does it really matter? What difference does it make what I believe about when God created? Isn't it enough just to believe that He created? We hope to answer these questions and more through a careful study of the word of God.

It seems that everywhere you turn today people try to convince you that the world is billions of years old. The media is heavily involved in enforcing this idea through magazines, books, and movies. The theory of an old earth is stated as a fact beyond dispute. Of course, this is because of the teachings of evolution. Because of these teachings the Biblical account of creation has been called into question.

Many people today look at the Genesis account as more of a fairytale than they do an actual historical account. They take the opinion of some scientists over the Bible. Thus, we have the heart of the matter. Who do we truly believe? Do we believe man or God?

In the quest to determine who to believe, evidence is sought to prove the age of the earth. Evolutionists have evidence that they present and creationists have evidence that they present as well. What may surprise you is that the same evidence is used by both groups. You see, evolutionists and creationists all look at the same fossils and rock layers. They examine the same evidence. The conclusions that they draw from this evidence, however, differs greatly.

How can two groups examine the same evidence and come up with completely different conclusions? It has to do with their starting point. Evolutionists begin with the idea of billions of years and creationists begin with the Bible. What so many people fail to realize today is the fact that science is based on observation. In order to truly understand something scientists have to be able to recreate it and observe it. Herein lies the difficulty of the matter, the events of creation cannot be recreated. This leaves us with the theories and ideas of man verses the only eye witness account – the Bible. It really does come down to who you believe.

Let's consider what the Bible teaches regarding the age of the earth. *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”* (Genesis 1:1) The word create in this passage of

scripture means to make something that did not previously exist.¹ Prior to creation absolutely nothing existed except for God. God literally brought all things into existence.

In the gospel according to John we find further description of this event.

“¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” (John 1:1-3)

In this passage we read of two of the members of the Godhead. God the Father and Jesus. Within creation we can see the role of each member of the Godhead. The Father developed the plan and Jesus executed the plan by literally speaking all things into existence. Once we return to Genesis we read of the third member of the Godhead. *“And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”* (Genesis 1:2) Here we find the Spirit moving about giving organization to that which had been created.

The Bible teaches that God created everything over a six day period and rested on the seventh day. In other words, God created everything in one week. Now, this certainly does not go along with the teachings of evolution. Many, in an attempt to hold on to some form of creation while accepting some form of evolution, have called into question the length of the days in the creation account.

Are the days of creation literal 24 hour periods of time or do they represent an indefinite time period? As we consider this question our interpretation of the Bible becomes very important. Do you have a literal interpretation of the word of God or an allegorical interpretation of God’s word? A literal interpretation uses the rules of grammar in order to understand what the text says whereas an allegorical interpretation ignores grammatical rules and looks for a deeper hidden message. In other words, a literal interpretation takes the creation days as literal 24 periods of time and an allegorical interpretation denies the obvious and looks for something else.

The Bible does use figures of speech at times such as allegories and metaphors, but the majority of scripture can be understood with a literal straight forward interpretation. Could you imagine if people tried to interpret the meaning of letters, documents, or contracts the way that they often do the Bible. If they placed no emphasis on the original meaning of the words or the laws of grammar how could they really understand anything?

Imagine, if you will, a rich relative left you one million dollars in his will. Of course, you expect to get an actual literal one million dollars. What if a judge stepped in and stated that in this will one million did not actually mean one million. According to the judge one million is

¹ Vine, W. E. 1996. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville, TN : Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1996. p. 51.

really just a metaphor for one dollar. Would you accept such reasoning? You see, to deny the laws of grammar and meaning of words when it comes to understanding the Bible is the equivalent of saying that we really can't understand anything at all. Everything loses it meaning.

Now that we have established the importance of a literal grammatical interpretation of scripture, let's look at what the Bible teaches concerning the meaning of the word day in the creation account. *"And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and morning were the first day."* (Genesis 1:5) The word day appears 2,301 times in the Old Testament, and in the vast majority of those occurrences it has reference to a literal 24 hour time period. Out of all of those appearances in the Old Testament, only its meaning in Genesis is called into question. Why? Because men refuse to accept the Bible.

If you notice there are descriptive words used with the word day in Genesis 1. We find the words evening and morning as well as the word first. Without exception in the Bible, anytime such words are used to describe a day it has reference to a literal 24 hour time period. *"⁶And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt. ⁷And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord; for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?"* (Exodus 16:6, 7) These are the exact same words that appears in Genesis. Now if the children of Israel believed like some people do today, they really would not have had any idea when to expect the quail or manna from God. They knew exactly what God meant when he said evening and morning. *"And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening."* (Exodus 12:6) Once again, the children of Israel knew what God meant when he told them to kill the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the month.

Once we begin to understand the clear and undeniable teachings of the Genesis account, our question should be why did God take so long to create? If you really think about it, God took his time creating. He could have easily brought everything into existence instantaneously but He didn't. Why? *"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."* (Exodus 20:11) God purposely took His time creating the heavens and the earth. In the Ten Commandments we find that God set a pattern for man to follow. It is from creation that we get our week.

God took one week to create, but how long ago did that take place? In order to answer this question we look at the genealogies contained in Genesis as well as other passages of scripture. In Genesis 5 we find the genealogy leading up to the flood and in Genesis 11 we find the genealogies from the flood to Abraham. When we examine them we find that:

Adam had Seth when he was 130, Seth had Enos when he was 105, Enos had Cainan when he was 90, Cainan had Mahalaleel when he was 70, Mahalaleel had Jared when he was 65, Jared

had Enoch when he was 162, Enoch had Methuselah when he was 65, Methuselah had Lamech when he was 187, and Lamech had Noah when he was 182. Noah was 600 when the flood occurred. (Genesis 7:6) This adds up to 1,656 years from creation to the flood.

Then we find that Shem had Arphaxad 2 years after the flood, Arphaxad had Salah when he was 35, Salah had Eber when he was 30, Eber had Peleg when he was 34, Peleg had Reu when he was 30, Reu had Serug when he was 32, Serug had Nahor when he was 30, Nahor had Terrah when he was 29, Terrah had Abraham when he was 130. (Genesis 11:32; 12:4; Acts 7:4) This adds up to 352 years.

From this point we find that Abraham was 100 when he had Isaac (Genesis 21:5), Isaac was 60 when he had Jacob (Genesis 25:26), Jacob was 130 when he went to Egypt (Genesis 47:28), the children of Israel lived in Egypt 430 years (Exodus 12:40, 41), from the Exodus to the building of the Temple was 480 years (1 Kings 6:1). This adds up to 1,200 years.

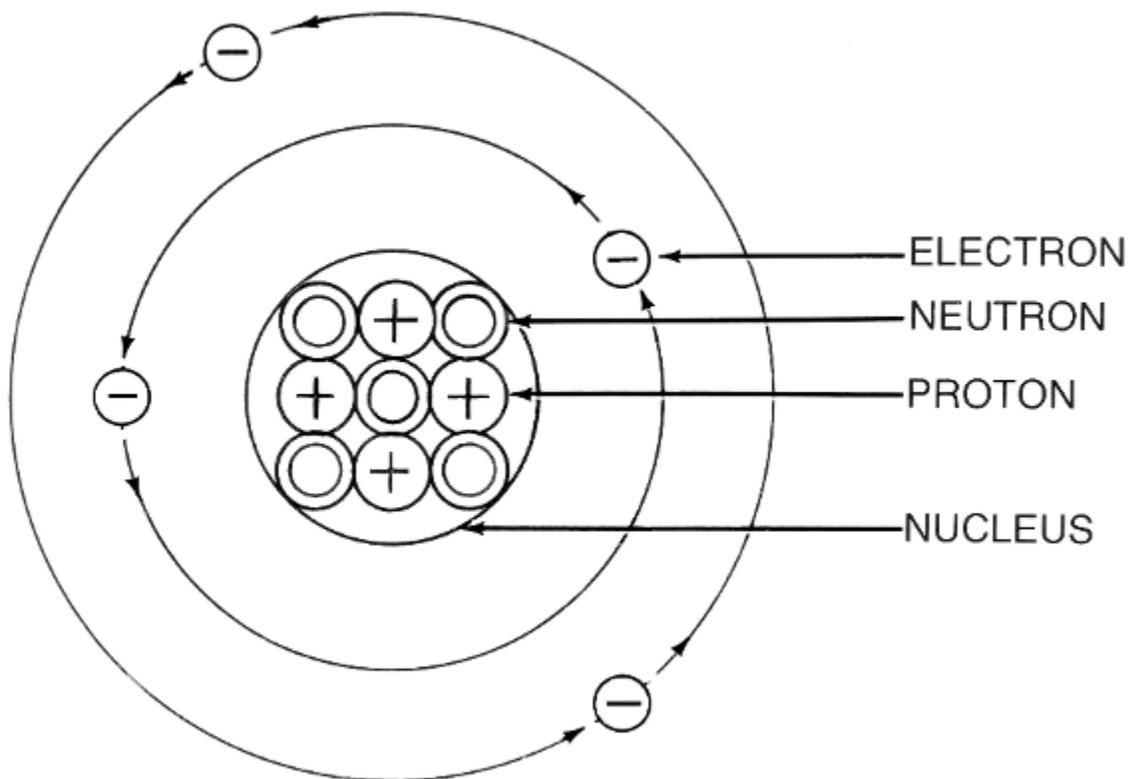
From the time of the Temple until the time of Jesus is around 997 years. When we put everything together we come up with a time line that looks like this:

Creation – 4,205; Flood – 2,549; Abraham – 2,197; Temple – 997

The world does not reject the time frame from the Temple until now, but it rejects the time period from the Temple to creation.

Many people today have been led to believe that science has disproved the Bible through the use of radioisotope dating. Through the use of such methods evolutionists insist that the world is billions of years old instead of six thousand years. Fossils and rocks are studied and often given dates that conflict with the Biblical account. When faced with such opposition many reject the teaching of the Bible and accept the word of man. There are some things that we must understand about radioisotope dating.

In order to understand this process we must review some basic concepts. Atoms are the basic building blocks of matter. Within an atom, protons and neutrons are located in the nucleus and electrons are located in rings around the nucleus. The number of protons located in the nucleus determines the type of element. For example, all carbon atoms have six protons in their nucleus. When an atom begins to decay, a neutron is converted into a proton. This causes the atom to become a different element. When carbon gains a proton it becomes nitrogen. It is this rate of decay that is used to determine the age of items. Carbon dating is used on organic matter such as fossils and other elements are used to determine the age of rocks.



With the use of radioisotope dating many assumptions are made. Take carbon for example. An assumption is made as to how much carbon originally existed in a creature, it is assumed that the rate of decay has remained constant, and it is assumed that nothing has altered this process. These assumptions are based on the evolutionistic belief that the present is the same as the past. Evolutionists' look at this process as it occurs today and believe that it has occurred the exact same way throughout time.

The flaws in this line of thinking became evident with the eruption of Mt. St. Helen in 1980. The same radioisotope dating used to date rocks billions and millions of years old was used on rocks formed from this catastrophic event. The testing gave dates for the rocks as great as 2.8 million years, however, it was known that the rocks only formed after the eruption.² The dating method does not allow for the effects of catastrophic events like those of Mt. St. Helen or the flood of the Bible.

Apart from radioisotope dating, other factors point to the flawed thinking of evolutionists' that all things continue just as they always have. At present, the moon moves an

² Ham, Ken. 2006. *The New Answers Book 1*. Green Forest, AR : Master Books, 2006. p. 118.

inch and a half away from the earth each year.³ If this rate has always been constant it presents a problem for evolutionists because the moon would have actually been touching the earth 1.5 billion years ago. It does not present a problem for the Bible because the moon would have only been 800 feet closer to the earth 6,000 years ago.

Also, the earth's magnetic field places serious doubt on the idea that the earth is billions of years old. The earth's magnetic field is caused by electric currents within its interior. As these currents meet electrical resistance they decay. Scientists have been able to study the earth's magnetic field for the past century and they have discovered that over this time period it has decayed by 5 percent.⁴ If we used the evolutionists' way of thinking than the earth's magnetic field should not exist today.

As we draw our lesson to a close, we ask the question, why does it really matter what we believe about the age of the earth? What difference does it make whether I believe God created six thousand years ago or six billion years ago? Well, the first answer to that question is in regards to the word of God itself. *"I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise they name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified they word above all thy name."* (Psalm 138:2) God places His word above His own name. If we reject the teachings of God's word than we reject Him.

Furthermore, to accept the idea of the earth being billions of years old means that death occurred prior to the first sin. The Bible makes it clear that death entered the world after sin. *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."* (Rom. 5:12) Death is not natural. By that, I mean it was not originally in God's creation. The Bible teaches that death is an enemy and a consequence of sin.

It is because of sin that a sacrifice was needed. In the Genesis account we read that God made Adam and Eve coats of skin. This is a reference to the first sacrifice. *"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."* (Heb. 9:22) This was necessary in order for sins to be forgiven. Ultimately, the sacrifices of the law led to the perfect sacrifice, Christ. To deny that death came about as the result of sin is to deny the need for Christ's redemptive work. If Genesis loses it's meaning than the Gospels lose their meaning as well.

³ Lisle, Jason. 2009. *Taking Back Astronomy*. Green Forest, AR : Master Books, 2009. p. 55.

⁴ Lisle, Jason. 2009. *Taking Back Astronomy*. Green Forest, AR : Master Books, 2009. p. 59.

In the end, we are left with two conflicting beliefs. Do we believe man and evolution or do we believe God and creation. It is time and chance verses plan and purpose. Is death the natural course of things or a curse from which we can be freed only in Christ? God's word has spoken on the matter. Do you believe the Bible?