

S.H.E.L.L.

Creation, Science and the Bible

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Creation, Science and the Bible

"Neither Creation nor Evolution can be proven or even tested, since both are in the realm of history, nevertheless, [Christians] maintain that the 'creation model' can be used to explain the observed scientific data far better than the 'evolution model'" (Morris). However, even among Christian creationists there are differences as to how God did the creating. There are young-earth creationists who believe that God created the world in six literal days with a word from his mouth as the Bible states. There are also old-earth creationists who believe that God did not create in six literal days, but rather six ages each lasting a thousand years or more, and that God used evolution or natural processes to do so.

A third group of people are the Christians who do not believe it is important how God created the universe because they think it doesn't affect their relationship to God today. But these people are mistaken. What Christians believe about creation does affect their understanding of God's Word and their credibility in witnessing. Christians cannot lead others to a belief that they themselves are not sure they believe. It would also be easier for these Christians to be led astray by persuasive arguments because they sound good, if they aren't certain about what God says about creation. In Hebrews chapter five we are called to go beyond the basics of salvation and dig into tough issues which would include creation. Therefore, it is important for Christians to know what they believe and what the Bible says.

Along with the Bible, another place where people go to find answers is science. Scientific evidence is available for both young-earth and old-earth models of creation, but neither can be absolutely proven by science alone because, quite simply, the origins

of life are not observable or repeatable. Conclusions on both sides of the debate are based upon presuppositions: old-earth creationists base their beliefs foremost on the findings of science; young-earth creationists base their beliefs on the foundation of the Bible.

The progressive creation theory was formulated by scientists who, although they are Christians, believe evolution to be true. Therefore, instead of throwing out evolution, they have gone into Genesis and reinterpreted its meanings. For many years evolution has been taught as truth when it is, in fact, only a theory. Through the education system, Christians have been fed evolution for so long that when they look at Genesis, they don't know what to believe. Progressive creation is a compromise, a way to believe the Bible and still believe in evolution. While old-earth creationists retranslate the Bible, young-earth creationists wait for scientific advancement to catch up and verify the truth already evident in the Bible.

When holding up the Bible as the infallible Word of God, three flaws become evident in the old-earth creation model. The first is that the proponents of old-earth creation accept non-biblical interpretations of science and presuppose that evolution is true. Second, they then base their translation of the Hebrew creation texts on this presupposition, compromising the Bible for unproven science. Finally, the old-earth model undermines the theology of the Bible which affects the beliefs of all Christians. As Bible believing Christians it is important to not interpret the Bible based on current trends or the best scientific evidence of the day. Instead, scientific data should be interpreted in the light of whatever specific revelation God provides in His Word. The young earth creation model not only is the best fit for the scientific evidence available,

but more importantly, it corresponds with what God tells us about how He created the world. Christians should not only believe God's word at face value but also understand it as thoroughly as possible and not embrace the theories of fallible science.

Hugh Ross explains the old-earth, or progressive creation, theory in his two books, *Creation and Time* and *The Genesis Question*. His view is that God started the creation of the world about 4 billion years ago using a big bang. He then let time take its course, only intervening here and there to help along the process. Ross's premise is that the Genesis account only gives the necessary information to show how God specifically intervened in the natural processes he established to set the stage for the creation of the human race (Ross, *Genesis* 52). To avoid getting bogged down with data Ross declares that God left some details out of the Bible in order to focus on the theme of the Bible, being Christ. He feels that we have the privilege to read between the lines and discover those details through studying the universe. It's our job to do so, as Ross says, "we even have yet to identify and name all the organisms" (Ross, *Genesis* 30).

In his discussion of progressive creation, Ross does not claim that the Bible greatly supports his theory, rather, he tends to show how the text does not exclude his beliefs. Ross begins his explanation of progressive creation prior to day-age one in Genesis 1:1-2 which states:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was formless and void and darkness was over surface of the deep and the Spirit of the Lord hovered over the waters.

Ross explains this verse to mean that at this beginning point, the sun and all the planets were created along with rudimentary life forms. He fits this view into the Bible by saying

that the word "hovering" in Hebrew implies a guarding over life. Like a mother over her young, the word "hovering" in Genesis could mean that there was life before day one. This explanation works with his old-earth scientific theory that the first life was that of non-photosynthetic aquatic plant life dating back about 3.5 billion years. Therefore, the existence of life prior to the six recorded specific acts of creation fits into the Bible according to Ross. (Ross, *Genesis* 29). In his account Ross assumes the reader accepts the notion that the earth is billions of years old and therefore does not give evidence for his point besides from those who agree with his interpretation of Hebrew.

Ross goes on to discuss the origin of light on earth in day-age one through his interpretation of Genesis 1:3:

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light... God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day. (Gen 1:3-5)

The old-earth creationists interpret the Hebrew word for the phrase "let there be" to mean "happen" rather than "to create from nothing." They speculate that it was on this first day that light penetrated the atmosphere of earth. Because of the big bang there would have been a thick cloud of dust and debris around the earth. Then, at this point in time, the moon came into our solar system and blasted away some of the atmosphere, clearing away some of this dust and allowing light to enter. Ross backs up his notion by explaining that since the moon is made of different materials than the earth, and is dated by scientists as younger than the earth, it most likely came from elsewhere. Ross also explains that this era of time is only called 'day one' in the Bible because until the penetration of light, there would have been no monitoring of time between day and

night. Therefore there was evening and morning for the first time on day one. Ross also explains in detail the possible meanings of the Hebrew word for day, saying it could mean anything from 24 hours to an age (Ross, *Genesis* 30-33).

In his explanation of day-age two, Ross makes the case for literal creative intervention by God. Genesis 1: 6-8 says:

And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it[...] And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day.

Ross concedes that only the hand of God could have formed the atmosphere with the perfect proportions it has (Ross, *Genesis* 33-36). Therefore he agrees with the young-earth creationists that there is no way that the atmosphere came to be the way it is through natural evolutionary process. It appears that Ross would pick and choose which aspects of the Biblical creation account to accept or modify based upon whether they can be explained adequately through science or if supernatural intervention is required.

In day-age three Ross defends the view of extended periods of time before "day one" by arguing that the text of Genesis 1:9-13 doesn't deny the possibility of microorganisms prior to the creation of plants.

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear[...] Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land."[...] God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the third day (Gen 1:9-13).

According to Ross, the Hebrew wording in the Bible does not exclude the evolutionary teaching of other living microorganisms before plants. He argues that it would be necessary for microorganisms to be first in order for evolution to produce bigger and more complex multi-cellular plants such as trees. The plants of day, or age three, could have been made through natural processes, divine intervention, or a little of both. It is for science to discover. Ross concludes that in reference to plants, a supernatural view has more evidence and is less problematic than a natural view (Ross, *Genesis* 37-42). Again he is picking and choosing what aspects of Biblical creation to keep and what to change.

By continuing to consider long periods of evolution as a given, Ross gives his hypothesis for the events of day-age four by referencing Genesis 1:14-19 which states:

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. God made two great lights--the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.

In order for the evolutionary process to have been taking place for billions of years, the sun had to have been in existence and, as Ross argued earlier, the moon as well.

Therefore, he speculates that the meaning of the account in Genesis is that the sun and planets were there before "day four," and that they were just not visible. Supposedly, they were obscured by the violent atmosphere which would have been full of CO₂ and volcanic admittance causing warmer temperatures and more clouds. He conjectures

that during day-age four the earth's rotation lessened, lowering the wind speeds. This would have caused less evaporation and less cloud cover similar to what is seen on Jupiter which has a rotation of 10 hours, resulting in very high wind speeds and a thick cloud cover. The plants at the time would also have lowered the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere causing lower evaporation and greater visibility. But it is all speculation, and no evidence exists to prove it. How Ross fits this explanation into the Bible is his interpretation of the meaning of the Hebrew word "made." The tense of the word implies an action already completed. The planets would have been formed before day one with the "heavens and the earth." In this way Ross explains how evolution could fit into the Biblical account of creation (Ross, *Genesis* 42-46).

Ross affirms that the fifth day-age found in Genesis 1:20-23 is consistent with scientific theory that sea creatures came before birds, and birds before land animals.

God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good [...] And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day (Genesis 1:20-23).

Although Ross believes in the introduction of animals in an evolutionary type progression, he does not believe in the natural evolution of fish into birds. God had to step in. He reasons that the more complex animals were specifically created (Ross, *Genesis* 47-53). With no consistency, Ross puts God into the picture only when he can not explain it any other way.

The same selective use of literal creation is used by Ross on day-age six referenced in Genesis 1:24-26:

And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so [...] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

According to Ross, certain land creatures created on day-age 6 were more "soul-ish" than others. In other words, their behavior can be altered and influenced by human behavior and sin. Ross claims these animals were specifically created by God as part of the support structure designed for man, and the rest of the animals were introduced earlier to evolve under natural processes. Ross uses the same idea with humans. Adam was created from the dust by God and a soul was breathed into him. However, human/ape-like creatures were in existence before Adam that were not made in the image of God, such as Neanderthal, but rather evolved and then became extinct (Ross, *Genesis* 53-57). Ross provides no backing for this claim besides the fact that evolutionists have always dated man back 1.5 million years. Throughout his whole explanation, Ross assumes science and finds ways to fit it into the Bible.

Ross makes a persuasive case for an old-earth creation interpretation of the Bible. However, we must remember that it is only speculation from which three particular shortcomings can be seen. First, progressive creation is based on the assumption that evolution is true, which cannot be proven. Second, it assumes the

accuracy of Ross's translation of Hebrew, which is also debatable. Third, old-earth creationism undermines the theology of the Bible including death before sin.

One issue in the progressive creation view raises the question: can science prove the age of the earth? Science is unable to prove anything that is not observable or repeatable with experimentation, as in the case of the origin of the universe. Scientific evidence is plentiful for both a young and old earth. However, it would be more accurate to say that it is the interpretations of the evidence that are plentiful for each, because, in fact, both use the same evidence. Both old-earth and young-earth creationists look at the same earth, the same fossil record, and the same stars to interpret the origin of life. They each use the present to interpret the past. It is their assumptions, beliefs and biases that make them see things differently. Thus, when young earth creationists and old-earth evolutionists debate about the evidence, in reality, they are arguing about their interpretations based on their pre-conceived ideas. Some are pure conjecture, while others seem to fit the data very well (Ham, "Where is the Proof?"). Four examples of this evidence are the moon, the sun, erosion, and Carbon 14.

An illustration of evidence used by both young and old earth creationists is the moon. It is generally accepted that the moon is slowly spinning away from earth by centripetal force. By extrapolating this rate of change over time, scientists determine that the moon could have been in contact with the earth about 1.4 billion years ago (Ham, *War of the Worldviews* 64). Ross uses this idea as the basis for his interpretation of the Biblical "day one" in which he conjectures that the moon did indeed collide with the earth. However, his explanation is inconsistent with his theory because such a moon

collision would have been 1.4 billion years ago, based upon the rate the moon is moving now, whereas Ross claims that "day-age one" was about 3 billion years ago. It is also a little far fetched to say that the moon came flying in and only knocked away some atmosphere without obliterating either itself or the earth. The moon spiraling away makes no problems for a literal six day creation, however. The data fits a young earth because 6,000 years ago the moon would have only been 800 feet closer, which is not a long distance, considering the moon is 0.25 million miles away. Therefore, the moon can be used as explanation and evidence for both an old and a young earth. But the data still must be stretched and manipulated if we are to believe Ross. Why the moon is moving away largely depends on the original assumptions of each theorist.

Another controversial evidence is the age of the sun and how it fits into an old-earth or young-earth creation model. It is widely believed by scientists that the sun is becoming consistently hotter and smaller. The sun, like all stars, gets its energy from a process called nuclear fusion. It is a process where a number of small, fast moving nuclei fuse together into one. The mass decreases, but a substantial amount of energy is produced. Using Einstein's formula, $E=mc^2$, scientists have calculated that in this process of making energy, the sun loses 4 million tons of mass per second from it's original mass of 1.99×10^{27} tons. Like a huge hydrogen bomb, fusion in the sun combines three hydrogen nuclei with a helium nuclei. The combined nucleus takes up less space than the individual nuclei, thereby increasing the density, i.e. mass per volume, of the sun's core. The contracting core increases both the pressure and the temperature, making fusion easier and the sun hotter (Sarfati, "Our Steady Sun").

The young-earth creationists argue that if the sun started out hot enough to support life, and the earth is billions of years old, the sun would now be much smaller and hotter than it actually is. Long-agers call this a paradox, but it's not a problem if the earth and sun are only 6000 years old. If a billion year timescale were true, the sun would be 25% brighter today, implying that "in the beginning" the earth would have been frozen as -3°C . Because most paleontologists believe the earth was warmer in the past, old-earth creationists make excuses such as increased greenhouse gas. However, for greenhouse gas to have a significant effect on the earth's temperature, it would necessitate 1000 times more CO_2 in the air (Sarfati, "Sun"). The only evidence for progressive creationists to cling to is that a 7 year study using new photoelectric measurement showed that the sun did not shrink between 1974 and 1981. Ross felt the study laid the conflict to rest. (Ross, *Creation* 106-107) But since it was only seven years and the machine was new, the conflict will only rest until technology comes up with something better.

One example of evidence used by young-earth creationists can be found in the fact that we are not under water right now. "The continents cannot be billions of years old because they would have eroded away long ago. There would be nothing left," says Tas Walker in his article, *Eroding Ages*. Water is the culprit. Each day, tons of rocks and minerals are dumped into the oceans. Wind, glaciers, and waves are a comparatively small percentage of erosion, but it adds up even though it is hard to measure the exact amount of erosion per year because of catastrophes. Scientists have found that the average height reduction for all continents of the world to be 60 mm per 1,000 years, which equates to billions of tons per year. For a billion year old continent,

the erosion rates would be staggering. In 2.5 billion years there would be nothing left and the planet would be under water. The young-earth creationists' explain that the earth and continents are not that old, therefore, this erosion rate presents no problems for a young-earth model (Walker).

The old-earth creationists are not completely speechless, however. They have two main comebacks to the erosion accusation. One is that shelf tectonic uplift from below, making up for what is being eroded away on top. However, if this were the case, we would be constantly finding new underground sediment everywhere including on the mountains which hasn't happened. Another argument is that the erosion rates were different in the past because of less rainfall, but the fossil record does not support this explanation. Instead, because of the abundance of lush plant fossils that are found, even evolutionists agree that the earth was likely more wet in the past (Walker). Therefore, it seems that again, a young-earth creationists' point of view better fits the scientific data.

Another controversial issue is the validity of carbon-14 dating. Much of what the evolution and old-earth creationists believe about the age of the earth is based on carbon dating. Despite the advances in technology, there is a good deal of guesswork involved in the process of dating an object. The process is basically a count of how much carbon-14 (C^{14}) is left in a dead plant or animal after so many years of radioactive decay. Most of the carbon in the universe is carbon-12 because it is more stable. However, a small percentage is carbon-14. C^{14} is made from a collision of nitrogen-14 and cosmic rays in the outer atmosphere. It is very unstable and almost immediately undergoes radioactive decay at a constant rate of one half every 5730 years. Carbon-14

is so well mixed with C^{12} that everywhere you will find the same ratio of C^{14} to C^{12} . While an animal lives, decayed carbon will be continuously replaced with new carbon. However, when that animal dies, the C^{14} will decay away, while the C^{12} will remain. Scientists can calculate this rate of change and can use it to find an estimated age by the amount of C^{14} still left (Ham, *Answer* 65-67).

Although carbon dating seems rather straight forward, there are some problems. First of all, scientists cannot determine if the ratio of C^{12} to C^{14} has always been the same through the ages. There are some who believe that because of certain factors, C^{14} is being made in the atmosphere faster than it is decaying, which would cause the ratio to change. In addition, these scientists do not know whether this ratio change is a constant or cyclical. Not knowing the initial ratio is problematic in determining if a change has taken place (Ham, *Answer* 67-70).

The second problem with carbon dating is that of accuracy. Once something has decayed over 10,000 years, there is such a small amount of C^{14} left that it is hard to determine an accurate date. There is so little C^{14} to begin with, that once an organism has been decaying for a while, the percentage is so small that it could date anywhere from 10,000 to 1 billion years old even with the most precise measurement possible (Ham, *Answer* 70-72).

The third issue concerning carbon dating involves the fact that scientists have determined the prehistoric ratios of carbon in fossils based on old-earth assumptions. They expected the fossils to be old because of the rock layers they were in and to maintain their theory. So, they used carbon dating to prove the age of rocks and fossils, and by extension, evolution. And then by using evolution and old rocks, they try to prove

the validity of carbon dating. Henry M. Morris, the author of *Creation and the Modern Christian*, put it this way: "Naturally, creationists have long insisted that this entire system [of dating rocks and fossils] is a classic case of circular reasoning, and evolutionists are finally admitting it." Carbon dating is another prime example of how scientists come to conclusions using their preconceived ideas.

Although science cannot prove one theory over the other, it does help to verify what is already found in the Bible. The young earth model seems the most plausible for the evidence, and no matter how hard old earth creationists and evolutionists try, their explanations are unconvincing. Many ways exist to interpret the world we see, but God was the only one there when it was made. Since he tells us in His Word how he created the world, we should begin our study of origins believing Him and not the theories of man.

Another main shortcoming in the view of old-earth creationism is that it twists the Bible to fit the latest in science. The progressive creation theory tries too hard to ram the evolutionary model into the Bible. Specifically, in Ross's portrayal of the old-earth creation model, he uses many alternate Hebrew definitions. Hebrew has a limited vocabulary and many of the words have multiple definitions. However, what translators call "normal translation" is a method that has been used over the centuries by both Jewish and Christian scholars and is recognized as trustworthy by most scholars. While it is not necessarily a literal translation, normal translation takes into account both history and context to determine the best meaning of a particular word. It is not just accepted because it has always been that way, but because the Bible has been constantly studied and retranslated over the years, and the results have remained

consistent. One major controversy is over the translation of 'day' for the six days of creation.

Ross justifies billions of years into the Bible by bringing an alternate translation to the Hebrew word "yôm" or "day" (Ross, *Genesis* 65). In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word, "yôm," is used to mean both age, such as "the day of the Lord," as well as a literal 24 hour day (Ross, *Creation* 45-47). The Bible even says in 2 Peter 3:8, "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." Ross contends that "yôm" in Genesis is figurative and the use of "morning" is metaphorical, as in the phrase, "the dawn of time." Ross even claimed that "a majority of scholars that study Genesis 1 (excluding scientific evidence) favor a "long day" in their translations, typically 1,000 years. None explicitly endorse a 24 hour period as a translation" (Ross, *Genesis* 66).

However, there are also many who believe in the 24 hour translation of "yôm" in Genesis. According to *The Answer Book* "yôm" is never used in the Old Testament to mean anything other than 24 hours unless specified in context (91). A general rule of interpretation is that the first time a word is used in a document would not be figurative. A word cannot be used metaphorically unless it's original meaning has already been defined (92). The interpretation of Second Peter is also flawed. Second Peter was written in Greek and therefore does not use the word "yôm." Also, it says that a day is *like* a thousand years, not a day to God is a thousand years (Ham, *Answers* 97).

One reference to the days of creation that uses the word "yôm" is in Exodus 20:8-11 which states:

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work[...] For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea ... but he rested on the seventh day.

This passage says that the Lord blessed one literal day out of the week because He rested from work on that day of the week, and we should as well. One Hebrew word would not be used with two separate meanings in the same paragraph to mean both day and age. In addition, these verses are part of the Ten Commandments which were written onto stone by the finger of God. They contain no error. Dr. James Burr, professor of Hebrew at Oxford University stated, "So far as I know, there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that [...] creation took place in a series of [...] days of 24 hours." (Ham, *War* 98). There is no substantial evidence from the Bible that the days of creation were ages and not literal days (Ham, *Answers* 91-92).

The old-earth creationist Hugh Ross says in his book *Creation and Time*, "When science appears in conflict with theology, we have no reason to reject either the facts of nature or the Bible's words, rather, we have reason to reexamine our interpretation of those facts and words because sound science and sound biblical exegesis will always be in harmony." The basis of his mindset is that science has the same authority as the Bible. That is not true. We should never change or reinterpret the Bible just because it is in conflict with science.

The whole idea of putting science on an equal plane with the Bible, or using science to interpret the Bible is dangerous and unwise. Science can be disproved and

changed from year to year with the latest technology. On the other hand, the truths of the Bible are timeless and should not be tampered with. The evolutionists keep finding "the missing link" but then turns out to be false. For example, The Cro-Magnon man, Peking man, and many others have come and gone but "the Word of our God stands forever" (Is 40:8). The Bible should always be the basis for what we believe. Anything that does not fit into God's truth is not the truth.

Some old-earth creationists use an argument from history when the church didn't accept that the earth was round even though it was proven by science. The church leaders were stubborn and said it was heresy. The church of that era didn't want to lose their total influence and control and refused to look into the matter. However that is not the case today, and to use this argument is faulty.

Today the church is neither ignoring the issue nor science, but rather is digging deep into research and searching the Bible to find answers. It is not a matter of closed mindedness or blind following. Evolution is a theory, and there is no scientific reason to consider it as the only option. Multiple facts have been given to demonstrate that an old earth does not even fit into the Biblical account, giving more reasons not to stretch the Bible to fit false findings. "It is a principle of how one approaches the Bible" (Ham, *Answers*). If God's word is twisted in this instance, then it could be twisted in other ways as well which ultimately could affect one's salvation. Therefore it is most important to believe the whole Bible and not compromise the truth of the Word of God for science.

The main criteria for deciding which creation model to believe should be how well it fits the rest of the Bible. Hugh Ross, in his book *Creation and Time*, argues that an old earth is theologically correct. However, he again assumes science as the ultimate

authority and that the evidence for evolution is conclusive. There are three main aspects of an old-earth creation model that don't work theologically into the Bible. The first is how much emphasis is placed on studying nature compared to what the Bible actually says. The second is how the old earth model hinders our view of God's omnipotence. The final aspect is how an old earth conflicts with the Bible's teaching of sin being the cause of death. These are important issues in finding the truth because the true interpretation of creation will not be in conflict with other parts of the Bible.

When the old-earth creationists see evidence of an old earth, they believe the earth must be old, because first, God wouldn't deceive us, and second, it would be against his nature to create something with age. However, these arguments contain some inherent flaws. Ross references the verse from Psalms 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands," and Romans 1:20 "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." Ross interprets these verses as saying that God speaks through nature. Geology and astronomy are there to fill in the blanks of creation as outlined in the Bible. According to Ross, God would not lie to us through nature, therefore, what can be observed as evidence of an old earth must be true (Ross, *Creation* 55-58).

In their context, however, these verses are intended for atheists: "That men are without excuse." If nothing else, mankind may know that there is a God by looking at creation. The verses aren't telling us that nature will answer all our questions. We do not have to go to nature when God specifically tells us in His Word what happened. Ross is

right in saying God wouldn't deliberately deceive us through nature. In the same way, neither would God deliberately deceive us in His Word when he says "there was evening and there was morning" if they were not literal evenings and mornings. God does not deceive. He told us what he did, and we can choose to believe or not believe. We should not ignore the direct revelation of God in His Word and accept the extrapolated interpretations of men.

Ross suggests another reason that a young earth cannot be true, and that is because God would not create a brand new earth that was physically half-dead. Since his evidence points to an old earth, the only explanation he has for a young earth would be that God made it with age. Ross argues that this would be inconsistent with the young-earth creationists' view of the character of God. When Ross sees oil fields and coal deposits, he assumes it took billions of years to make. He then concludes that the earth must be old because in his view, God wouldn't create something with age ingrained in it (Ross, *Creation* 53-54). However, since there was no death in original creation, 'old' or 'young' made no difference. Age was not the road to death and was therefore not a bad thing. The presence of coal and oil underground would not have to imply ages of organic decay. God didn't create the world "half-dead" rather, he created it mature and ready for human activity. "And God saw that it was good."

The second theological issue concerning an old-earth creation view is a diminishing of God's omnipotence. By believing that He needed to use natural processes and billions of years to create the universe, our understanding of his power is weakened. Unlike the traditional creation, where God created with words and from the dust of the ground, in progressive creation God would have had to use evolution. This

implies that He couldn't get it right the first time and had to experiment, mutate, and change creatures in order to find one that wouldn't become extinct.

The progressive creationists come back with the argument that it is no different to say that God *needed* six days than he *needed* billions of years. He could have done it all in a second. Just as young-earth creationists say he *chose* to create in six days, the old-earth creationists say he *chose* to take billions of years (Ross, *Creation* 70-71). However, the time taken is less of the issue than that he *had* to use 'natural' processes. God is beyond science, for he created it. He didn't need to experiment with mutations, letting some animal become extinct while trying to find the superior creatures. God did not need to make things using laws of physics and reactions. "God is limited neither by natural processes, nor by time. God is outside time, for he also created time" (Ham, *Answers* 97). He created it all by a word from his mouth (Psalms 33:6), specially designing each atom, each cell, and each creature. "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). God is omnipotent and his power is shown through his creation, not through evolution over billions of years.

The final contention over the age of the earth is that of the possibility of death before sin. In order for old-earth creationists to believe that there were billions of years of evolution between day one and when Adam sinned, they must also conclude that there was death before sin. However, the Bible teaches that because of Adam, sin entered the world and death through sin (Romans 5:12). Because the shedding of blood is needed for the remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22), there could not have been bloodshed before sin.

Old-earth creationists think that it is impossible for there to have been no death before sin regardless of six days or six billion years. Evolution requires billions of years of struggle and death for experimentation and mutation. Old-earth creationists have two explanations for their model. First, they say that the Bible could hardly mean no death at all because it is impossible for *nothing* to have died in even one or two days. Even before day six, for any of the fish or birds to move there was a good chance that something got squashed. Second, Ross points out that the whole idea of six days is ridiculous because of all the evidence for an old earth: "To reject the reality of physical death among plants and animals before the creation of Adam and Eve defies both the scientific and Biblical data. Life can be reliably dated back to 3.86 billion years ago." Therefore, in Ross's point of view, an old earth is no worse than a young earth theologically since they both would include death (Ross, *Creation* 64-65).

The death of plants and amoeba is not the issue, however. Instead, it is the shedding of blood. God gave plants to Adam and Eve for food, but according to the Bible, there was no bloodshed before sin. God created a perfect world without death and said it was very good. If there had been death, it would not have been good; there would have been no need for atonement through blood, and no need for Christ's death on the cross (Ham, *War* 104). Ross says that the Bible is vague in details to keep us on the theme of Christ, but creation and the Fall are a major aspects of Christ's mission. We cannot move away from the issue of sin resulting in death without undermining our belief in Christ's atoning blood. The authors of *The Answer Book* say that to believe in old-earth creation "seriously undermines the whole New Testament gospel emphasis in relation to sin, death, bloodshed, redemption, and the curse" (90).

Old-earth creation does not meet the criteria of being consistent with the Bible. Observing creation only tells us so much about God and what he did. Instead of basing our beliefs about creation on nature, we should look to God's own words in the Bible first. The Bible should be the foundation of our beliefs, and we should not change meanings of Bible verses to fit with new scientific discovery. Evolution cannot be proven, nor should it be incorporated into the Bible. Compromising or retranslating the Bible in order to elevate science as the basis for belief about creation is erroneous. Even beyond the realm of science, the old-earth evolutionary model undermines the very foundations of theology of the Bible. Believing in an old earth puts God's omnipotence into question, and most importantly, conflicts with redemption through blood.

The young earth model of creation is consistent with the Bible's teaching that no animal died before Adam's sin, making his action the root cause of death. The fact that death was the punishment for sin was the reason that Christ had to die to pay for our sin. Christ's redemption is the very heart of the Bible, and it is undermined by progressive creation theory. Therefore, the theological conflict between the Bible and the old-earth creation model should be the determining factor in a Christian's decision of what to believe about creation. The creation account is a pillar of Biblical doctrine. If it crumbles, it shakes the very core of the Christian faith. It is important that our understanding of creation is correct. Otherwise, we will fall for a lie. And if we aren't sure of what we believe ourselves, we cannot share it with others. Choosing to place God's Word first, including belief in a six day creation, is fundamental to understanding God's plan of redemption through the ages and in our lives.

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