

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Look at Creation – Part 3

- I. Amongst Christians, there are several different views of the Creation account of **Genesis 1:1-31**. In this study, we're going to primarily examine the two most predominant views. As we look at these views, it's important to keep in mind that there are variations of each. The two views we'll study are, **1) The Young Earth View (YEC)** and **2) The Day-Age View (OEC)**. As we study these two approaches, it's good to keep in mind the following counsel offered by Dr. Norman Geisler:
- “A crucial variance between the two views, naturally, is the age of the earth... Young earthers insist that both the Bible and science support a universe that is only thousands of years of age, while old earthers allow for billions of years. Young earthers connect their view to a literal interpretation of Genesis (and Ex. 20:11), but old earthers claim the same basic hermeneutic, which they believe can include millions, if not billions, of years since Creation. They too cite scientific evidence in their favor**
- At a minimum, it would be wise if both sides could agree on the following:**
- (1) The age of the earth is not a test for orthodoxy.**
 - (2) Neither view is proven with scientific finality, since there are unproven (if not unprovable) presuppositions associated with each.**
 - (3) The fact of Creation (vs. evolution) is more important than the time of Creation.**
 - (4) Their common enemy (naturalistic evolution) is a more significant focus than their intramural differences.”¹**

II. Young Earth Creationism.

- A. Young Earth Creationism is the belief that the entire universe, including the Earth and all life on it, was supernaturally created by God within the relatively recent past. Generally, they estimate that creation occurred only about six to ten thousand years ago, with some advocates allowing for up to 20,000 years ago.² This view interprets the six days in **Genesis 1** as six consecutive and literal 24 hour periods.
- B. According to Genesis 1, God created different things on each literal day. Creation is completed on the sixth day with the creation of mankind (**Genesis 1:26-31**). The mention of an evening and morning for each day (**Genesis 1:5,8,13, etc.**) is proof for them that creation took place in six, 24 hour days.
- C. A passage of Scripture used to confirm this position is found in **Exodus 20:11**. This is where God is giving the ten commandments to the children of Israel and gives Himself as an example of working six days and resting on the seventh (Sabbath). (**cf. Exodus 31:17**).
- D. Genealogical accounts in Scripture, (**Genesis 5 and 11**) establish age spans and sequential timelines from Adam through the generations that follow. From these genealogies, some scholars have come up with a creation date of around 4004 BC.
- E. Noah's Flood is often placed around 1600 years after creation (**Genesis 6-9**). Young Earth Creationists believe the Flood extensively reshaped Earth's surface and is a major key to understanding geology. Proponents hold that most of the fossil record, strata, and geological formations seen today can be attributed to this event.
- F. Adherents maintain that a faithful reading of the Bible requires embracing the creation account as literal. They affirm **II Timothy 3:16**: **“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for instruction...”** and hold that acceptance of alternate interpretive models undermines a straightforward reading of the text. Authors J. Ligon Duncan III and David W. Hall write:
“We do not believe that Christians of the past, who lacked the scientific expertise of our day, were less capable of interpreting the Genesis texts... To us, the words and meaning of Scripture are little changed from the interpretations of Basil, Ambrose, or Calvin. The only things that have changed are the extrabiblical and secular cosmological theories of the past two centuries...History may prove us wrong, but to date, we assign higher enduring status to the interpretations of Scripture from 2000 B.C. – A.D. 1800, than we do to those influenced by evolution from A.D. 1800-2000.”³

G. Some young earth believers embrace what is sometimes called the **“Ideal-time theory”** or **“mature**

¹ Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology: In One Volume* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2011), 646.

² See, Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 304.

³ *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the days of Creation*, David G. Hagopian, Ed., (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux Press, 2001), 24.

creationism.” Dr. Wayne Grudem explains:

“Many who hold to a young earth point out that the original creation must have had an ‘appearance of age’ even from the first day...The appearance of Adam and Eve as full-grown adults is an obvious example. They appeared as though they had lived for perhaps twenty or twenty-five years, growing up from infancy as human beings normally do, but in fact they were less than a day old. Similarly, they probably saw the stars the first night that they lived, but the light from most stars would take thousands or even millions of years to reach the earth. This suggests that God created the stars with light beams already in place. And full-grown trees would probably have had rings...Following this line of reasoning, might we go further and suppose that many geological formations, when originally created, had a similar appearance to formations that would now take thousands or even millions of years to complete by present ‘slow’ processes?⁴

III. Some Objections to Young Earth Creationism.

- A. The word for day here is “*yom*”, normally means a literal, 24 hour day but it can mean something else. Note **Genesis 2:4** which reads; “**This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens**”
- B. If viewed from God’s perspective, a day can be longer: “**But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**”- **II Peter 3:8.**
- C. It is difficult to imagine that Adam could name all the animals in a single day.
- D. The earth produced life as stated here: “**And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.’ And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” - Genesis 1:11-12 - ESV.** Some of those opposed to YEC would challenge this by saying is it to be believed that this happened in a ‘time-lapsed photography’ sense or naturally took time? Specifically, ‘seeds’ are mentioned; it would seem they would grow naturally rather than immediately. Their origin may have been supernatural, but their growth was natural
- E. Some YEC adherents argue that an old earth view says death came before the sin of man. However, Scripture says that “**all men**” die because of sin (**Romans 5:12**); it does not say animals didn’t suffer normal death
- F. One of the major positions of YEC is that the dating of the creation of the cosmos and all of life can be determined from piecing together and adding up the ages of the people that are listed in certain biblical genealogies. This is a false premise because it assumes that the Bible contains a complete listing of all genealogies from Adam to Christ. It has been proven by historians that this is not a reliable dating method because the Hebrews were not like Americans in our passion to include every family in our genealogical history in chronological order. The Hebrews included certain people for specific reasons and if someone was an embarrassment to the family, he might not be included. This flawed dating methodology was developed by Anglican Archbishop James Ussher in 1650 and has been used by YEC up to the present day. Ussher calculated the beginning of creation to be October 23, 4004 BC. Consequently, every scientific theory of YEC must fit within this narrow dating framework of Ussher, even if his presuppositions are wrong.
- G. Christian apologist, Dr. Douglas Groothuis offers the following concerning YEC:
“...a coherent Christian worldview should attempt to bring together ‘the book of nature’ (Psalm 19:1-6) and ‘the book of Scripture’ (Psalm 19:7-10; 2 Timothy 3:15-17) as leaders of the scientific revolution understood it Francis Bacon referred to them as ‘the book of God’s Words’ and the ‘the book of God’s Works’ God is the Author of both the Bible and creation, and since God is the God of truth, these two books will not contradict each other Therefore, both books need to be interpreted correctly according to the appropriate principles There is overwhelming evidence that the universe is 13-15 billion years old and that the earth is ancient as well... Therefore, if the Bible does not clearly insist on a young earth or young creation, and if the evidence of the book of nature supports a much older universe, it is not necessary to defend a literal six-day creation and a universe that is only several thousand years old.”⁵

⁴ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 304–305.

⁵ Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 273-274.