

An introduction to “Young Earth Creationism”

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Description

- The description “**Young Earth Creation**” is OK but is not my preferred description
- Better is “**Biblical Creation**”
- Or “**Special Creation**”
- “**Biblical Creation**” indicates our foundational argument
- “**Special Creation**” describes the mode of creation, derived from the foundation
- “**Young Earth Creation**” indicates an outcome, not the “driving force”

Scientific Creationism

My aims

My aims for today are ...

- To explain where we are coming from
- To clarify our approach to Scripture and science
- To dispel some misunderstandings (I hope!)
- To encourage dialogue in a Christian way

The starting point

The creationist's starting point is common to that of other evangelical Christians:

- What does the Bible say?
- What are the scientific data?
- There is a need to challenge *our interpretations* of each of these as conflicts develop
- Obviously there is disagreement between us on the answers to these questions
 - But, we respect other brothers and sisters in Christ as Christians and as scientists

Respect for biblical revelation *and* scientific data

We must allow each to speak first
without interpretation

- All approaches to this issue of origins *can* manipulate Scripture to fit in with their own scientific models
- We must clearly differentiate scientific data and our interpretations of them
- We must always check our motives

The Creation Manifesto

- Some years ago, the Biblical Creation Society published this document summarising our position
- This is available as a booklet or, in summary, on the “web”

– http://biblicalcreation.org.uk/bcs_publications/manifesto/link.html



What does the Bible say?

We carefully consider the literary form

- We don't claim a "literal interpretation" of Genesis (or anywhere else) *per se*
- Analysis of the textual structure is **historical**
 - Attempts to dismiss it as poetic, parable, myth, *etc.* do not hold up
 - Only **poetic statements** are 1:27 and 2:23, expressions of pleasure
 - It is generally recognised that the original author's intention was historical

Comparison with other Scripture

- It is a fundamental principle of biblical interpretation that we should compare Scripture with Scripture
- **Our Lord** clearly took the Genesis account as historical
 - He refers to Adam and Eve, marriage, the Fall, Noah and the Flood, *etc.*
 - He never hesitated to correct false ideas held in His day!
- Similarly, **the apostles** quoted from these passages

The Ten Commandments

The Genesis account is also a foundation to **the Ten Commandments**
e.g. Exodus 20:11
– is that true or not?

"For in *six days* Jehovah made the heavens and the earth..."

— *Exodus 20:11*



The creation account

- The structure of the passage is well known and we will not discuss it further at this point
- What we have is a **series of divine fiat**
 - “**God says**” and “**It was done**”
- This is typical of the way God acts
 - At the “**word of God**” (see 2 Peter 3:5-6; Psalm 33:6)
 - Is this just an expression?
 - It is used of prophetic utterances, miracles, blessings and judgment (see 2 Peter 3:7 again!)

Consequences for scientific study

- From that account, we have to recognise that we are dealing with **MIRACLE** in Genesis 1-2
- It is a mistake for creationists to try and explain the processes by normal science!
- **However**, we can look for the scientific consequences
 - Just as in John 9:8ff for example

Interpretation

We must be honest in our use of both sources of data

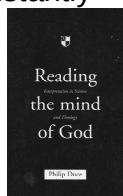
- We must recognise the need to **accept all sorts of evidence**: witness statements as well as material data
 - as in a forensic case!
- We must recognise **priorities**
 - Scripture is the ultimate authority
- **But**, that does mean we must be careful in our examination of Scripture

God communicates

- Sometimes we are told that God recorded things this way because “*primitive man would not understand a scientific explanation*”
- Notice the assumptions
 - : Primitive man – that is an evolutionary assumption!
 - : God would not be able to make early man understand evolution – really?

Bringing the two sources together

- It will always be the case that –whatever our starting position – we must constantly check our Scriptural and scientific interpretations
- Duce describes it as a spiral situation
 - Phil Duce, “**Reading the Mind of God: Interpretation in Science and Theology**”. Apollos, 1998
- Let each refine the other as we increase in our knowledge of them



Locating history

Where is the evidence of the events of the creation week and the Fall?

- We would need to look for perfection (Genesis 1-2) followed by imperfection (Genesis 3)
- But we can't expect to find them!
 - Historically they occupied a very short time close to “the beginning”
 - Biblically the evidence would also have been destroyed by the Flood in the days of Noah

The design argument

How does creationism relate to intelligent design?

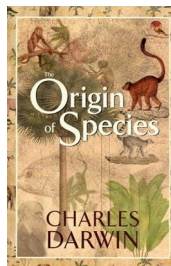
- The ID movement is driven by scientific studies
- The BC movement is driven by Scripture
 - If we accept the biblical account, then we must believe that God designed life

“Bad design” – the big picture

- Often the design argument is countered by the “**bad design**” argument
- “***God wouldn’t have done it that way***”
 - Who says so? Do we know better than God?
- But the flaw in the argument is that the Bible gives the answer and it is ignored
 - The Fall of man (Genesis 3)
 - As a result of man’s sin, God cursed the world (Romans 8:20) for man’s benefit!
 - to demonstrate the awfulness of sin
- Often the claim to bad design can be seen to be false!

“Microevolution”

- There is confusion over the creationist position on this
- Darwin’s book title is “**On the Origin of Species**”
- Most of Dawkins’ evidence for evolution is at the species level too
- Creationists don’t have problems with this!



Adaptation and speciation

- The evolutionary mechanism for the production of new species is **mutation**
 - We accept that as a contributory factor
- *BUT*, we **also** recognise that, at creation, God created the genome of the created kinds with the ability to adapt rapidly
- We see no evidence of evolution from one kind to another

Young Earth?

Back to the publicised title!

- We believe that the Bible teaches “six day creation”
 - that’s no problem for a miraculous process!
- This event occurred several thousand years ago
 - that is based on the genealogical data
 - even if there are missing generations, they cannot be stretched to greater times
- Recent research, the RATE project, shows this is a viable (preferable) interpretation of radiometric data

Theological issues

Many of our doctrines are affected by the Creation etc. account

- What does the natural world teach us about God?
- Romans 1:20 – His eternal power and divine nature
 - Many other Scriptures amplify this statement
- There are many issues in Genesis 1:
 - His creative power, His concept of “good”, His intelligence, His spiritual nature, His lordship, etc.

Other theological issues

- **The nature of mankind**

- His distinct creation
- “In the image of God”

- **The nature of evil**

- Rebellion against God
- Its judgment

- **The need for salvation**

- Christ's death and the curse

- **The final judgment and salvation**

He wore a crown of **thorns**
He suffered **pain**
He shared our **nakedness**
He was **abandoned** by God
He experienced God's **wrath**
He **died** for our sins
He died on the **cross**
– the curse and Tree of Life!

Concluding thoughts!

- **Please don't judge Creationists by Dawkins' diatribes** – check out what we believe and why
- **Please don't swallow the common dismissal of us as anti-science**
 - **Many creationists** are significant in their scientific fields and hold full professional qualifications
 - **Many of the founders** of modern science (and its disciplines) were creationists and they were motivated by the Bible

Thanks for your attention!

