

Historical Geology

How old is the Earth? When did the Beginning happen? The Bible does not actually state how old the Creation is. We need to remind ourselves that the purpose of Scripture is to tell us how to get to Heaven and not to explain how the universe works. Nevertheless, Bishop James Ussher (1581-1656), a Protestant church leader in Ireland who was quite gifted in many fields, used the generations listed in Genesis combined with sources outside of the Bible to calculate the year in which Creation happened. He came up with 4004 B.C. This would make the world about 6000 years old. This was widely accepted in the Western world.

The establishment of the universe also created time. Science has linked time to space and raised more questions. Be that as it may, God is outside of our space-time continuum. He told Moses that His name is *Yahweh*: "I am" (Exodus 3:13-15). In our time-bound way of thinking: He always was, He is now, and He always will be. However, He is not part of nature, He created it for us and sustains it. All knowing, He sees everything in it at once.¹

The purpose of this essay is to look at efforts to date the Beginning of our world from the Bible and from Geology. It deals with the power of assumptions, naturalism, the nature of creating something and the nature of science. It was written especially for the students and their current teacher, Hannah Schneekloth, at Michigan Lutheran High School.

The Bible's Chronology

The Scriptures are unique in that no other source gives a historical account running from the absolute beginning of time up to events that are knowable within the ordinary human record. Many saw this as a proof of the bible being inspired by God. With Scripture one can trace and date history from the first people all the way to the time of Christ and the apostles. It tells us our origin. Not even the thoughtful Greeks produced a record like this (Barr, 65, Maier, xv). However, still the Bible never states exactly how old the Earth is, and the purpose of the chronologies is to trace the coming of the promised Savior and to show that all the peoples of the Earth are related, not to specifically date the Creation. Yet, on the other hand the Bible record is historical, and the chronological data in it lends itself to curiosity and calculation.

Ussher's Biblical chronology is the most well known. Ussher was not the first or last to use Scripture along with other records to estimate the age of the Creation. Johannes

¹ Theologian August Pieper stated, "...the laws of finite reason are not applicable to the infinite. We know in one way; God knows in all ways. We know mediately; God knows immediately. We know partially; God knows completely. We know very little, God knows all. We know one thing after the other; God knows all things at the same time."

Kepler and Isaac Newton also did along with many others. Ussher's effort, over a thousand pages long, was however claiming impressively precise times.

Bishop James Ussher's work in 1650 became the best known because the Church of England endorsed it and even included the dates in the margins of the King James translation of the Bible. There was no controversy about the geology at the time. Ussher had just wished to demonstrate that Protestant scholarship was equal, even better, than that of the Jesuits. After careful work he reported the Creation as having happened in 4004 BC and even speculated that the beginning of time was on October 22. For the October date he used the Julian calendar and traditional timing of the Jewish Year, plus the assumption that it must have been harvest time in the Garden of Eden for fruit to be available, and therefore close to the autumnal equinox. Then he even stated that the first night began at 6 pm in line with Jewish tradition that evening always precedes daylight as recorded over and over in the Creation narrative: "And there was evening and there was morning...." The exactness of Ussher's claims and obvious assumptions unfortunately cause many to ridicule his work.

History requires chronology. One cannot resist noting that before Ussher, Martin Luther, in preparation for his lectures on the book of Genesis, also constructed a detailed timeline from Creation up to his own era. It would be interesting to know if Ussher knew about Luther's effort. Both assumed a timeline of 1000-year intervals marked by important events. Luther accepted that Christ was born at the interval of 1 BC/AD. His calculations indicated that the Creation must have occurred in 3960 BC. However, he assumed that 4000 would be what God had in mind. To gain 40 more years and have a neat set of 1000 year eras, Luther felt quite good about making Christ's Resurrection the major event in 34 AD to end the era instead of using the birth of Christ. He still needed six more years. Luther felt, with support from the prophecies in Daniel, that the Jerusalem meeting of the apostles mentioned in Acts 15 formally declared the break from the Old Testament and met that need (Barr, p.52). His timeline, *Supputatio annorum mundi* (Chronology of the age of the world), was first published in 1541 followed by a reprinting and then a translation from Latin into German. It is readily available in the Weimar edition of Luther's works but has not yet appeared in the English language. Luther's Works are being published by Concordia and Fortress.² Keep in mind that for Luther, Ussher and others the age of the Earth was not a theological issue until later geological studies questioned it.

Such calculations require assumptions; you cannot escape making them. The chronologies in the Bible from Adam and Eve to Noah are straightforward, but later in the Bible there are problems and puzzles. Some names may be missing. Some lineages may indicate a jump to grandchildren rather than children. Outside events are not always easy to correlate. At any rate even with adjusted and creative estimates, the total age of the Earth using the Bible, can only be stretched from 6000 to a possible 10,000 years. The Earth appears to be young.

²See <https://books.google.com/books?id=VbtRAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false> for the original publication of Luther's timeline. It is interesting that Luther included the names of some of the popes on his timeline but wrote them upside down.

A New Worldview: The Earth Looks Older

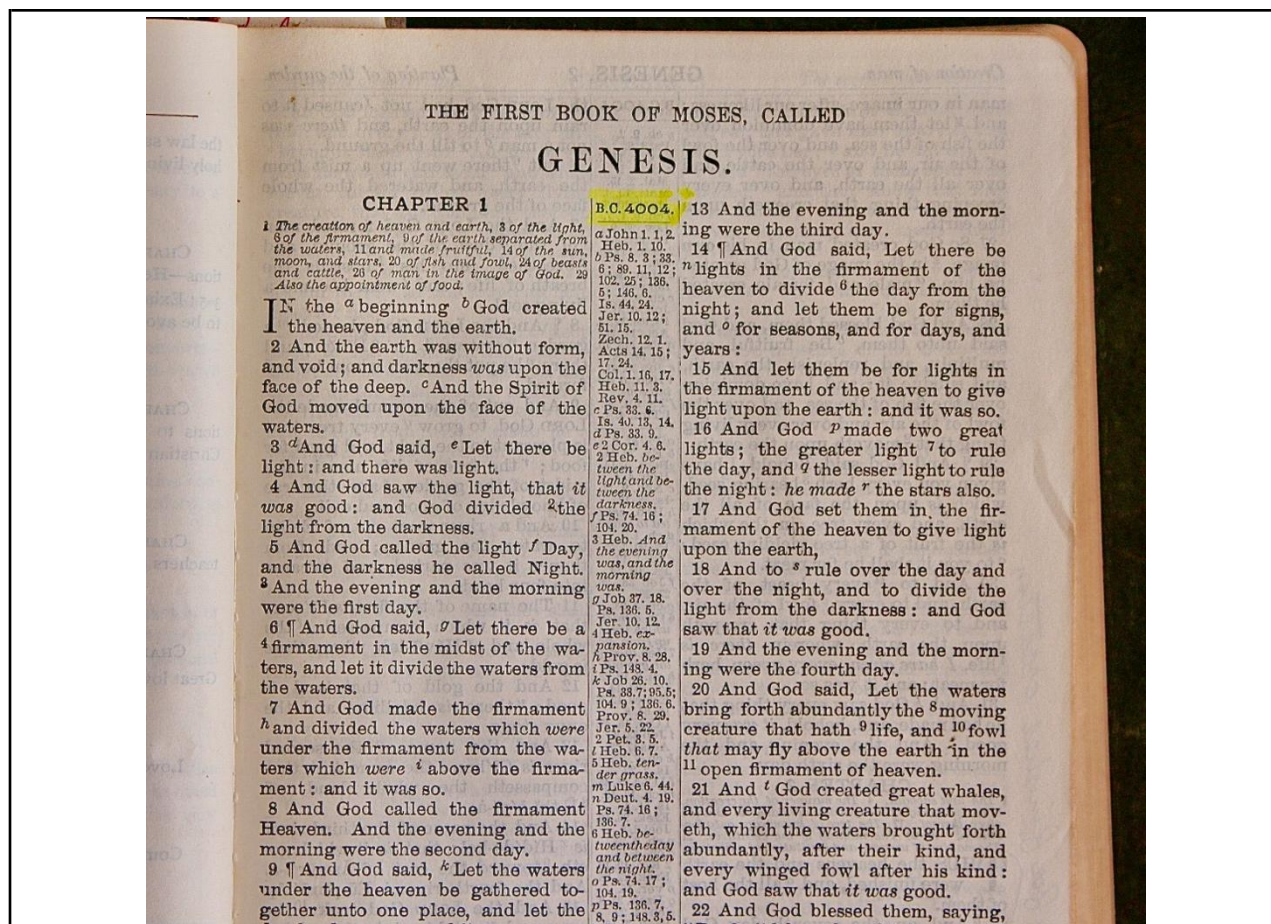
All went smoothly until 1785 when James Hutton, a Scottish naturalist, was invited by the Royal Society of Edinburgh to give two lectures on the theory of the Earth. Hutton had observed that erosion could form soil from rocks, but erosion could also carry the soil away into the ocean.³ His friends knew of his fascination with minerals and soil formation but did not expect what he was going to propose. For some reason Hutton was not up to presenting and had asked his best friend, Joseph Black, to deliver the first lecture for him. The first lecture proposed that the loose materials that eroded and collected in the oceans were consolidated by heat and pressure, then rose up to produce new land in layers or strata completing a cycle of rock to soil and soil back to rock.

As planned, the second lecture was given four weeks later by Hutton himself. He now offered that the strata must have been forced up by heat deep in the Earth. He argued that if the layers observed in the Earth were merely the result of receding waters from the Genesis Flood, they would all be horizontal. Observation, however, showed that the strata were often at angles and even twisted. Hot, liquid rock must be the pushing force. This natural action completed a cycle to regenerate soil. Support for his hypothesis was found in the fossils which represented captures of life from former cycling. That could still be fitted into the concept of a relatively young Earth, but now Hutton added the kicker that observation of the rate of erosion and movement of strata was very slow and required that the world was extremely old, old beyond comprehension and certainly beyond the young Earth indicated by the Bible. Everyone before had assumed that the Earth must be about 6000 years old. This was a revolutionary break in the standard thinking.⁴ Accordingly, the observed world was not the result of a series of sudden dramatic events such as the Genesis Flood (catastrophism). Clearly, a conflict in worldviews had emerged. Hutton was proposing that natural processes had gradually produced what we observe, but this required an enormous amount of time (uniformitarianism). The Bible was being challenged. Hutton is now considered the father of historical geology and “Deep Time.” Bishop Ussher is now often unfairly ridiculed for his calculations.⁵

³ Steven Jay Gould noted that this insight was Hutton’s “paradox of the soil.” It called for a mechanism of restoration or all the soil would finally be lost.

⁴ Repcheck, Jack (2003). *The Man Who Found Time: James Hutton and the Discovery of the Earth’s Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus.

⁵ Steven Jay Gould, an evolutionist, called ridicule of Ussher’s work unfair. He notes that Ussher worked with the data that was available from not only the Bible but also outside sources.



The King James Translation of the Bible. Note the inclusion of Ussher's date for Creation (my highlighting). Ussher's dates are used continuously to mark events in this translation. The King James version was accepted as the standard in English from the 17th Century into the middle of the 20th Century. The Bible pictured was a gift to the author from his parents in 1957 when he headed off to college in New Ulm. Passages were memorized in the King James version.

Ussher accepted that Christ had to be born before 1 BC/1 AD. This was based on the record of historian Flavius Josephus who recorded that Herod, who attempted to kill Jesus, died when a lunar eclipse occurred. There was an eclipse in 4 BC. So Jesus had to be born before that. Kepler agreed that this lunar eclipse set the time. Ussher thus moved Creation from 4000 to 4004 BC to have 4000 years before Christ's birth. However, human error and assumptions are always a problem. Controversy has arisen because another lunar eclipse occurred in 1 BC. Perhaps Josephus meant this one. The issue is not settled.

An aside about dating years. In AD 525 a monk in Rome, Dionysius Exiguus (Dionysius the Humble) (c. AD 470 – c. 544), was asked by Pope John to end confusion and establish a system for calculating the future dates of Easter. So Dionysius made a table of 95 future dates for Easter and listed the rules for determining the dates. In the

process of listing Easter dates, he invented *Anno Domini* (the year of our Lord) dating because he disliked the current system of naming years after Emperor Diocletian who had persecuted Christians. It is uncertain how Dionysius arrived at an exact year for Christ's birth. The information in the Bible along with other evidence does not allow pinpointing the time. Various studies have Christ's birth somewhere between 1 and 7 BC.

By the way, there is no zero year in the Anno Domini setup.

William Buckland's Effort to Find Agreement

Responding to a claim for a very old Earth, one can try to get more time out of the genealogies of the Bible, but the most some have been able to do is to gain a few thousand additional years. The Bible, if read straightforward, indicates a relatively young earth. At the same time, historical geology has estimated an age of 4.5 billion years, the universe 26.7 billion.

William Buckland (1784-1856), both a theologian in the Church of England and an outstanding geologist, tried to bring the Bible and Hutton's geology into agreement. Buckland held onto belief in the universal Biblical Flood but rejected the idea that it was responsible for most of the observed geology. He favored the effects of the ice age. Buckland responded to Hutton's time problem by proposing a gap in the Genesis Creation story (gap theory). He suggested that geology and the Bible could be brought into agreement if there were a large amount of additional time and creative activity happening between the opening verses of Genesis and the six-day Creation. He felt that "in the Beginning..." included a time gap before the six days in which God performed a series of activities including creating other life before coming to finally setting up the world for humans. Buckland was an impressive lecturer and colorful character. His home was filled with specimens that he had collected. He and his wife had a table that included inlaid fossils of dinosaur dung (coprolites). He was the first to describe a dinosaur.

Lyell's Principles of Geology Text

Charles Lyell (1797-1875) studied under Buckland and the two became friends, but he came to agree with Hutton's theory of deep time with the world constantly undergoing slow, subtle changes driven by natural processes still active today. He agreed that the key to understanding the past was to observe the processes active today. In 1830-1833 Lyell published a three-volume set of books that became the standard for Uniformitarianism for many years.

Uniformitarianism is the assumption that the same natural laws and processes that operate in our present-day scientific observations have always operated in the universe in the past and apply everywhere in the universe.

The Effect on Darwin

In 1831 Charles Darwin, a recent graduate in theology but also a strong naturalist, accepted an offer to join a five-year expedition around the world on the HMS Beagle. A former teacher and mentor, John Henslow, who had recommended Darwin for the trip gave him volume 1 of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* to take along. Darwin picked up the other two volumes later during the trip. Charles was supposed to function as a gentleman companion for Captain Robert Fitzroy on the voyage. However, Fitzroy's favoring of Darwin's collecting specimens offended the official naturalist. He quit and transferred to another boat, and Darwin completely took over the function.

Darwin was impressed by reading Lyell's views on geology. He began to see that slow, imperceptible changes in geology could mean the same for biology. The changes did not require active action on the part of God; the processes were natural. When Darwin returned to England, he immediately arranged to meet with Lyell. They became close friends. Darwin now began to formulate the theory that nature selected which forms of life reproduced and survived.

Geology Today

The Hutton-Lyell view is the foundation of today's historical geology. That the world looks older than what the Bible indicates is confirmed by modern studies involving radioactive dating and isotopes. Arthur Eggert, an emeritus professor from the University of Wisconsin and Pastor Geoffrey Kieta, a WELS Lutheran, give the following example supporting an apparent age.

Consider radioisotopes A, B, and C. Say that they have respective half-lives where A would decay to non-detectability in 1000 years, B in 10 million years, and C in a billion years. If Earth is 6000 to 10,000 years old, isotope A would not be detectable, while B and C would be. If the age of the world is in the billions of years, all three would have decayed to levels that we cannot detect.

"Isotope abundance studies" begun in the 1950s searched for radioactive elements occurring in nature. The findings showed that radioisotopes with shorter half-lives are not found in nature unless there is a process that generates them such as is the case with carbon-14. Based on what is found and what is not found, the age of Earth *appears* to be in the billions of years (Eggert, 2022, 137).

Another approach to dating is to use radiometric methods that look at the radioactive decay of an element into a daughter element. Potassium-40 decays into argon-40. One can determine the ratio of potassium-40 and argon-40 to estimate the age of the sample. More argon-40 would indicate an older rock. As usual, assumptions are involved about the initial amounts, the rate of decay, and possible escape of the argon. Granitic gneisses in the vicinities of Morton and Montevideo in the Minnesota River Valley are dated at 3.55 Ga (billion years) ago and are the oldest rocks so far found in North America.

Looking only for possible natural causes for everything, scientists have constructed a natural history for our existence:

A Model of Major Events in Deep Time⁶

- 13.7 Ga: The Big Bang: the universe and time begin (Some put the date at 26.7 Ga.)
 - 4.56 Ga: Our solar system forms.
 - 4.54 Ga: Earth forms
 - 4.408 Ga: oldest mineral yet discovered on Earth
 - 4.031 Ga: oldest rock yet identified on Earth
 - 3.85 Ga: carbon is available on Earth
 - ~3.5 Ga: stromatolites increase oxygen on Earth
 - 630-542 Ma: first large and complex multicellular soft-bodied organisms (the Burgess Shale fossils and the Cambrian Explosion)
 - 542 Ma: Cambrian boundary
 - 251 Ma: largest mass extinction on Earth
 - ~200 Ma: Pangaea, all the continents on Earth are one land mass
 - 65 Ma: second largest mass extinction on Earth (end of dinosaurs)
 - 3.9 Ma: Australopithecines, ("Lucy")
 - ~350 Ka: Neanderthals
 - ~130 Ka: modern humans
- Ga = billions of years ago, Ma = millions, Ka = thousands

Virtual Time

A plain reading of the Creation story shows that when God created the world, it was ready to go. Adam and Eve were mature enough to care for themselves. Trees were full grown with fruit. There was soil in the garden. Light from far distant stars was already visible. If you could visit this beautiful garden with your time machine, unless you were told you would not conclude that it had been created only a short time before. You would think in terms of natural causes and effects. For example, you would see a tree and expect that it grew from a seed, which came from a parent tree, which grew from a seed *ad infinitum*. Any created object, a tree, a river, a person, will immediately suggest a natural history that never actually happened. We cannot escape the conclusion that Creation included appearance of a history that never took place. If Adam would cut down a tree in the Garden, would it have rings and signs of seasonal growth that never happened normally? If not, it would not be a tree as we know it, nor would anything.

The recognition of virtual time in Creation goes back to the time of Lyell and Darwin. Two years before Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, Phillip Henry Gosse (Gahs) wrote *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot*. The title is Greek for the navel or belly button. Gosse, who trusted Scripture, asked if Adam and Eve had navels. Gosse knew that because of their creation they did not need them, but he assumed that God would have included them. His book listed many examples of created things indicating events in time that never happened. His point was that Creation would include virtual time.

⁶ Based on a scale posted by the National Center for Science Education (<https://ncse/ngpo/deep-time-primer>)

How far does such time that never happened extend into the virtual past? Is it consistent? We do not know. Science is in the middle of it and treats it as real time and forces consistency. Consistent results are assumed and expected. When Mary Schweitzer, a paleontologist, recently discovered the remnants of blood cells and protein in the fossilized femur of a *Tyrannosaurus rex*, others said that this was not possible. Any soft tissues ought to be decayed after 75 million years. This made the *T. Rex* sample look younger. Mary escaped by accepting the idea that iron from the red blood cells had taken oxygen away and thus had preserved the tissue. Facts have to fit the paradigm (worldview). *T. Rex* had its age restored and was back into consistency with the way in which science views nature (Boehlke).



A leg and foot from a *T. rex*. The top bone is the femur (thigh bone). Photo by Henry Osborn is in the public domain.

Science is Valuable, but Limited

Modern science has moved away from exploring any theological understandings in nature. It only considers natural causes (methodological naturalism). As such, it ideally does not and cannot deny God or, on the other hand, attempt to prove His existence. Of course, one cannot escape being confronted by the awe and wonder of Creation. All can see that the universe is finely designed so that we can live here. Romans 1:20-25 states that there is no excuse for not seeing in nature that God has created us and all that we see. But note that the Scripture reference also states that mankind can block that insight and end up worshiping nature without God. To claim that there is no God is an unwarranted move to philosophical naturalism.

Our science is limited by everything that is part of being human. We can be wrong when we build our models. History shows that science changes (Kuhn). Assumptions can lead one astray. Facts do not speak for themselves and have to be interpreted. Discovery always raises more questions. Even our math has limits. Consider that the Schrödinger equation describes the energy levels of a single electron in a hydrogen atom, but we do not yet have the math for more complex atoms that have more electrons.

Yet at the same time, science can be a tremendous blessing in so many ways. We should not ignore scientific knowledge that does not conflict with our faith. Luther wisely pointed out that God uses the skills of people to grant us “daily bread” in the broadest meaning of the concept. When my doctor prescribes the antibiotic amoxicillin to battle the *Enterococcus faecalis* bacteria that is out of control in my body, he acts as a “mask of God.” Behind this cover God works to preserve us. This is “daily bread.” Our students need to be aware of this tension. One can look at nature and discoveries without God, but God is there behind them.

God is very consistent in how He operates in nature. We interpret the consistencies as laws of nature. Imagine a world in which there would be no consistency. The Devil would love it. It would be a world of chaos and confusion. We would not be able to trust anything. All of the “natural laws” would fail if God were not active in them. At the deepest level there are no natural causes and events; God is active in all (Colossians 1:17).

We trust science and technology in many ways. Science produces very useful and trustworthy knowledge in daily life, but still can be wrong especially in matters that concern our faith. Methodological naturalism can get out of hand. It can morph into a philosophical or metaphysical naturalism that assumes that everything we experience is the result of natural causes. Some may use science to claim that there is no God (or that He is not currently active). Some may say that the Genesis story is a myth and that our origin is the result of natural causes. Isaac Newton started it by denying God's continued preservation (Deism). He saw God as a creator that allowed everything to run by natural laws without any supernatural interference or supervision. Later Darwin denied God as being active and necessary for our existence (natural selection). If one presupposes (assumes at the most basic level) that everything can be fully explained by natural causes, you compel yourself to develop and accept some kind of an evolutionary theory for everything. You have eliminated God at the beginning of your reasoning. You have eliminated all miracles. Nature is all that there is. **One needs to understand the power that assumptions have over the path that any reasoning takes.**

God is supernatural. He is not bound by nature; He created it and is outside of it. He can do as He pleases with nature (For more see C. S. Lewis. Miracles). Science cannot be allowed to claim that it is “the only way to know.” This is scientism. The history of science shows how our rational models have changed with time. Science is limited by everything that is human. We tend to be impressed by modern technology

that comes from our science and therefore may give our scientific efforts too high a place in our worldview. Students of science need to know how our understandings can change.

An easy example is that dinosaurs are now regarded as warm-blooded and bird-like with social behaviors. Once they were thought of as cold-blooded lizards that would lay their eggs and leave them. Thoughtful scientists recognize that our scientific understandings can change and are not written in stone.

Creation, the Flood, the Resurrection and many other things in the Bible are miracles. You cannot attempt to do science on them and force them to be explained naturally. Jacob's scientific experimentation with changing the color of the offspring of his sheep clearly had God's hand in it (Genesis 30; 25ff). If one does not ever see miracles, one does not believe in them.

Deep Time

The apparent old age of the Earth and the Universe could well be explained by the very nature of creating anything out of nothing. Any created object will appear to have an age that is not real, a virtual age. A Biblical clue to this is that Adam and Eve appeared to be mature beings on the day they were created. The trees, fruit, animals, soil, and rivers in the Garden all appeared to have a history that did not really happen. Creation was created with age so that it was working, so that it would "be good." There were far away stars in the sky with light already arriving. We should not be trying to find scientific evidence to support a young Earth, but rather just trust the Scriptures that indicate it is young. I was taught that Creation was "with age" at various levels as I went through WELS schools.

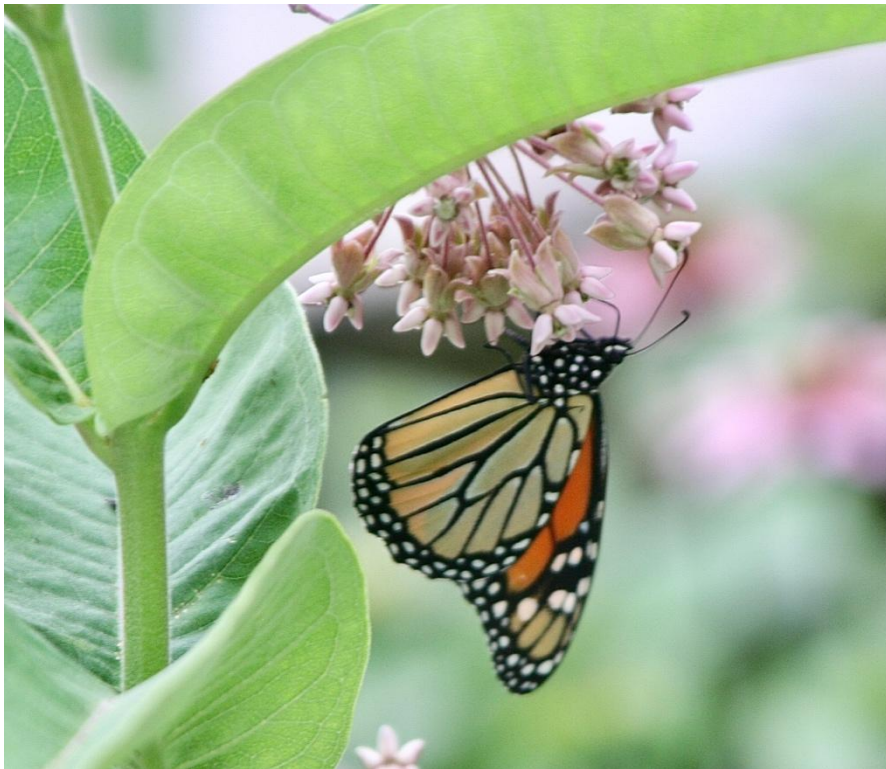
Some feel that God would be lying to us in nature if He created a young Earth that looks old. However, God cannot be accused of lying because He has told us what he has done in Scripture. If one goes down a pathway of accepting only natural causes and events, every miracle in the Bible becomes a lie. Nature by itself tells us that water cannot be turned into wine. One cannot walk on water. You have no soul, and the dead cannot be raised. However, God is not bound by nature's laws; He can do anything.

Who is God?

The new aggressive atheists quip that if God created nature, then who created God. And, of course, then who created that deity and so on and on. The assumption is that everything must have a cause, a natural one. In an event that showed God ruling over a natural event, Moses asked God who He was. The answer was profound. God did not answer with a name given by a parent. He did not give a name that revealed a natural cause for His existence or provide a backstory like a superhero in a comic book. God bluntly said, "I am" (Exodus 3:13-15). God has always been, is, and always will be.

Jesus also used “I am” and people knew that He was saying who He truly was. When He said “I tell you: Before Abraham was born, I am.” (EHV: John 8:58) they took stones and planned to kill Him.

The beauty and the complexity of everything in Creation certainly point to a Designer. There is no excuse (Romans 1:20). One should look for this God. That mathematics, music, and the arts work at all shows that the Creation was designed to be orderly. The order, proportions, symmetries, and relationships in nature are expressed in our equations, compositions, and structures. God holds it all together in a marvelous harmony (Col. 1:17).



Is God to Blame for What is Wrong?

The other side of the coin is that the Creation is suffering. Some quip that if God created everything, He should have done a better job because there is so much wrong in the world. Scripture clears that matter up in Genesis. Humans brought sin into the world starting with Adam and Eve. This brought about suffering and death. The book of *Job* is all about the problem of what God allows. Note that even at the end of the book Job is never told why bad things happened to him. He is told to be humble; his friends are scolded for their false assumptions. Job is guided to the conclusion that there are things

too wonderful for him to understand. We have to trust that God's thoughts and plans for us are higher than what we can reason out.

Critics tend to focus on the creation story in the book of Genesis and call it a myth. However, Creation is taught throughout the whole Bible. Jesus even refers to it without question (Mark 10:6).

The Purpose of the Bible

The Bible is not a book of science, but a guide for our rescue and salvation. If Moses had been inspired to include details about how God made Adam biochemically by using particular organic molecules, it would have been confusing to earlier people. Using clay was enough information. Furthermore, if Scripture would reveal scientific understandings that are still in our future, in terms and concepts that are not yet coined we would be confounded. For example, if the large creature in the book of Job is a dinosaur, God could not name it that. No one would know the meaning of that term. The word "dinosaur" had not been invented. Scripture approaches nature in terms that the people at the time of writing understood. Scripture's purpose is to show us "how to go to Heaven and not how the heavens go" (Rowland). If the Bible revealed details about physical things in Creation, the spiritual message would be buried and all of it would be beyond our understanding and would likely be rejected.

The Best Apologetic Argument

Currently, there are some concerns within our church body about the claims of Creation-science (as if there can be such a thing as Creation-science) that tend to question the details in evolutionary science. They can end up being embarrassed when they get things wrong. For example, the human footprints along the side of dinosaur prints in the Paluxy River bed were false. The second law of thermodynamics does not falsify evolution. The changes in the magnetic field of the Earth do not support a young Earth. Such claims go nowhere, never end the arguments, and can even damage faith when they are countered.

I believe that our best apologetic argument is to go to the heart of the reasoning. Point out that atheists that use science against Scripture are assuming that there are only natural causes and that nature is all that there is. Assumptions mean everything when you build your models of how things work. Secondly, on the issue of the age of the Earth and the Universe, let us just say that Creation was mature, thus causing virtual age (and had to be) and that scientists are thinking back into time that never was because they are looking for natural explanations. The concept of an old Earth cannot be disproven. Instead, we trust what Scripture indicates. God made a Creation that was good and ready to function. The critic again will say, then your God could have created

everything just a minute ago with memory in your head about things that never were. Yes, He could have, but God doesn't tell us that, or even imply it in Scripture so that such concerns are foolish. Scripture tells us the Truth and gives us the way we should view the world we live in.

Attempting to do science on the Creation event can cause endless puzzles. Dietrich Bonhoeffer warned that Creation makes no sense without Christ, the center of our faith. Those who doubt need to turn to the greatest miracle, the Resurrection, an ultimate challenge to philosophical naturalism. Recall that Luther liked ending an era at that key event in history: when Jesus triumphed over death. There were hundreds of witnesses that saw the risen Jesus before he ascended into Heaven. I cannot help but recall the repeated words of the Lutheran theologian and lawyer, John Warwick Montgomery. "This would stand in a court of law."

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