

Six Day Creation?

I wasn't raised in the church. In fact, I was spoon fed evolutionary concepts from childhood forward. At age nineteen, I was saved from my sin through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. I went off to Bible college and earned a theology degree, then went on to earn a biology degree. Since then, I have spent more than a decade doing field research in other areas such as palaeontology. I currently travel the world doing research relating to the historical accuracy of Genesis: Creation, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel.

Recently, a colleague and I submitted a scientific paper for publication in a peer-reviewed science journal. The research demonstrates that fossils from the last three erathems (rock units assigned evolutionary ages in spans of millions of years) all contain carbon-14. The most reasonable conclusion, based on our research, is that this huge portion of the geologic record was laid down recently (thousands of years ago), as a result of a catastrophic flooding event. More and more research is causing the millions of years to disappear. Though the vast ages are seen in the text books, they are not seen in the real world.

So what about Biblical creation accomplished in six literal days? Where is the church at on this issue? Most churches would acknowledge that they believe in God, and that He created the cosmos. After all, Genesis 1:1 states, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." There is really no doubt about it; Christianity is all about a personal God. In fact, it is impossible to be a Christian and deny God's existence. The Bible elucidates that this God is different from other so-called "gods," in that He is the creator God. He has not been manufactured in the human psyche, but rather the human psyche has been manufactured by God. Paul brought up this very point while he was on Mars Hill (Acts 17:18-34). He placed the true God—the creator God—in juxtaposition to the multiple gods they had manufactured from within their own minds. This God was not made by humans. Rather, humans were made by this God. To the Christian, these two undeniable tenets of faith exist without argument: God exists and He is the creator.

However, agreement about the details of His creation seem to be more difficult to grasp. Did He create directly in six literal days, or did He use evolution to do His creating? Did he progressively create over millions of years? Most churches aren't sure. Many pastors say it doesn't matter. Most Bible colleges refuse to take a stand on any particular point about how God created, or how long it took Him. Many Christians follow their pastors, their churches, or their seminary professors, and end up being agnostic on the issue. Even many fairly conservative evangelical Christians refuse to weigh-in on the debate. So what should one believe? Does it matter?

Many taking a dogmatic stand on six-day creation have been deemed divisive and unloving. The New Testament, however, demonstrates that divisions are caused by those who refuse to stand on the Word of God, not by those who do. According to the New Testament, in order to establish unity, the Church must be unified in the clear teaching of God's Word. This is true Biblical unity. Unfortunately, in what has been called a post-Christian culture, ultimate truth and final authority supposedly don't exist. Nevertheless, the Bible teaches that ultimate truth does exist, and it is given by the ultimate authority, God Himself.

How do we interpret the Bible? Let's look briefly at the idea of salvation. Salvation is explained in the pages of Scripture. The idea of salvation assumes language conveys meaning in context, and that it is understandable, and applicable. Nearly all evangelical churches affirm the gospel, that is the good news, that Jesus died in our place paying the penalty for our sin. This doctrine is established from the words of the Bible. It is interesting that many leaders in the church, who are agnostic about six-day creation, are dogmatic about salvation through faith alone in Christ alone. I don't want to point out the discrepancy and inconsistency, but are they rightly dividing the word of truth?

Conservative evangelical Christians seem fixated, and rightly so, on getting the gospel of Jesus Christ to as many unbelievers as possible. They are convinced that issues relating to origins, especially the age of the Earth, are nothing but destructive rabbit trails. Could it be that Genesis is confusing, difficult to understand, or impossible to believe? With so few leaders discussing it, and even fewer seemingly being able to draw any solid conclusions, what are we to think? Many in the church have concluded that we cannot know. Sadly, this simply isn't true. 2 Timothy 2:15 says we need to "[s]tudy to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

When leaders are prompted as to why they believe in evolution, or millions of years, or progressive creation, their answers are very telling. Most have been insidiously, yet powerfully influenced by our culture. You see, it's not really that Genesis is ambiguous, or unknowable, or confusing. The real issue, for many leaders, seems to be acceptance. It is not acceptable to believe in six-day creation produced by the very word of God (Hebrews 11:3). But, then again, it's not really acceptable to believe in virgin births either. Resurrections from the dead seem to be pretty few and far between these days as well. One man dying on the cross, paying the penalty for mankind's sin isn't gaining too much acceptance these days either. So, think very carefully about your view on six-day creation. Is your view directly from Scripture? Have you been influenced by our culture?

Jesus took Genesis as literal history, as did the Apostle Paul, as did every single New Testament writer who quoted from Genesis. Genesis is quoted directly about 68 times in the New Testament. There was universal agreement by the New Testament writers, and Jesus Himself, that Genesis was historically accurate and literally true. Genesis is to be understood as literal history: real people and real events. Historical narrative is easily understood. It means what it says. Genesis very clearly, in its context, explains that the entire world was created by the word of God in six literal days. The Hebrew word *yom*, in context with the words "night," "evening," "morning," and a number can mean nothing other than ordinary days. Exodus 20 further verifies the six-literal-day creation by comparing God's creation week with our work week: God worked six days and rested one, we are to work six days and rest one. If we take Genesis like Jesus did, and apply proper and consistent Biblical hermeneutics (the science of interpretation), then we are left with six literal days, a few thousand years ago. Will you follow Jesus in everything? Will you follow Him in every area, even His words on origins?

