

SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY

THE CREATION STORY

WHAT ATHEISTS SAY ABOUT US...

- “If God is omnipotent and omniscient, why didn't he start the universe out in the first place so it would come out the way he wants? Why's he constantly repairing and complaining? No, there's one thing the Bible makes clear: The biblical God is a sloppy manufacturer. He's not good at design; he's not good at execution. He'd be out of business if there was any competition.”-Carl Sagan

WHAT ATHEISTS SAY ABOUT US...

- “I am against religion because it teaches us to be satisfied with not understanding the world.” — Richard Dawkins
- “A wise man proportions his belief to the evidence.” — David Hume
- "Because there are laws such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the Universe going." — Steven Hawking

WHAT ATHEISTS SAY ABOUT US...

- “I don't have an issue with what you do in the church, but I'm going to be up in your face if you're going to knock on my science classroom and tell me they've got to teach what you're teaching in your Sunday school. Because that's when we're going to fight.”-Neil deGrasse Tyson
- “Not only are we in the universe, the universe is in us. I don't know of any deeper spiritual feeling than what that brings upon me.”-Neil deGrasse Tyson



THE PRIMARY CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES

- Young Earth Creationism
 - Ken Ham (Answers in Genesis) is the major voice currently espousing this viewpoint
 - Claim Big Bang is fictitious
 - Denies both cosmological and biological evolution
 - Sees the 7 days as 7 literal 24-hour days
 - Claims that science must start with Bible as authoritative foundation

THE PRIMARY CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES

- Old Earth Creationism
 - Hugh Ross (Reasons to Believe) is the major voice currently espousing this viewpoint
 - Supports Big Bang cosmology; sees Biblical support
 - Supports intelligent design (ID) over macro-evolution; accepts micro-evolution
 - Sees the 7 days as 7 stages, not literal days

THE PRIMARY CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES

- Evolutionary Creationism
 - Francis Collins (Biologos) is the major voice currently espousing this viewpoint
 - Supports Big Bang cosmology
 - Supports macro-evolution; accepts common ancestry
 - Sees the 7 days as functional assignment of order from chaos

THE PROBLEMS WITH THE PERSPECTIVES

- Young Earth Creationism
 - Little to no general scientific support for the claims
 - Is a very difficult position from which to evangelize skeptics
 - Adherents tend to be the most ardent that their view is the only true Biblical and, thus, the only true Christian position to have

THE PROBLEMS WITH THE PERSPECTIVES

- Old Earth Creationism
 - Widely accepted scientific support for cosmological claims
 - Very limited scientific support for biological claims
 - Reads a lot of modern scientific understanding into the Biblical text (eisegesis)

THE PROBLEMS WITH THE PERSPECTIVES

- Evolutionary Creationism
 - Widely accepted scientific support for cosmological claims
 - Widely accepted scientific support for biological claims
 - Faces a lot of criticism from well known American pastors and theologians because it seems to ignore the creation story altogether
 - Many see this view as dangerously close to deism

THE PROBLEMS WITH THE PERSPECTIVES

- Young Earth Creationism-problems are seen as mostly scientific
- Old Earth Creationism-problems are some scientific and some theological
- Evolutionary Creationism-problems are seen as mostly theological

SHOULD WE TRY TO BLEND CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE?

- Actually, that is the wrong question to ask...
- The question should be...

*Is it appropriate to pull scientific
truth from Biblical truth?*

REMEMBER THIS...PLEASE

- Regardless of the fact these three viewpoints disagree with the “how” of creation, they all agree to the “who” of creation.

SO, HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND THE CREATION STORY AS TOLD IN GENESIS?

- Genesis, in fact the entire Bible, was written *for* us, not *to* us.
- The creation story was written to answer questions of an ancient Hebrew audience, possibly as an anathema or polemic to refute conflicting reports from other ancient sources like Enuma Elish (Babylonian creation myth).

SO, HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND THE CREATION STORY AS TOLD IN GENESIS?

- It is necessary to separate out the essentials from the non-essentials:
 - Essential truths:
 - God existed prior to space, matter, time, and energy
 - God created the universe
 - God created all living things
 - God created man (male and female)

SO, HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND THE CREATION STORY AS TOLD IN GENESIS?

- It is necessary to separate out the essentials from the non-essentials:
 - Non-essentials:
 - The length of time the creation event envelopes
 - The process of how certain things, both living and non-living, came to be
 - The exact location where some notable events occurred

OKAY, SO HOW DO WE PROCEED?

- Therefore, we *must* ascertain what the original audience's cosmological understanding was in order to begin to interpret what the creation story is trying to impart.
- Why? Because the original author would want the original audience to understand that about which he is writing; there must be cultural context.

HERE'S A COUPLE QUESTIONS TO KEEP IN YOUR MIND AS WE MOVE THROUGH THIS CLASS...

- Could God have used natural laws (the laws of nature) to achieve His desired results?
- And if so, does that necessarily negate the creation story as being true?

DR. JOHN H. WALTON

- “We too often think of the relationship between the supernatural and the scientific natural as wedges in a pie-‘this piece is supernatural, this one is natural, etc.’ The relationship between the two, rather, should be seen as a layered cake: natural on the bottom, supernatural guidance on the top. Nothing that happens naturally is unguided by the supernatural.”

*Observation of natural cause and
effect does not necessarily
remove God from the picture.*

If we propose a claim that the Bible never intended to make, we become the authority rather than the text.

THE ANCIENT COSMOLOGICAL VIEW

- Earth is a large, circular disc.
- The universe is like a tent stretched over the disc.
- Nothing that happened naturally was separated from supernatural ordination; there was no separation between natural law and supernatural guidance.
- Their “world” was their known world and stretched as far as the people with whom their culture had been in contact.

UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEXT, INTERPRETATION, CLAIM, AND ENTAILMENT

- Text- what does it really say
- Interpretation-what does it mean to me
- Claim-what are the claims of the text versus my interpretation
- Entail-what necessary follows from the claim

UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEXT, INTERPRETATION, CLAIM, AND ENTAILMENT

- Text- In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth
- Interpretation-Everything that I see as being (not human made) is from God
- Claim-God created everything not human made from the beginning
- Entail-Humans were made by God



IN THE BEGINNING, GOD
HE WAS THERE AT THE ONSET



IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED THE
HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.

HE WAS THERE AT THE BEGINNING, AND HE BEGAN THE
WHOLE PROCESS OF BRINGING THINGS INTO BEING.



NOW THE EARTH WAS FORMLESS AND EMPTY
THERE WAS ZERO FUNCTION, ZERO ORDER, AND ZERO
WORTH, NOT ZERO MATERIAL

“Genesis 1 contains an account of functional origins, not material origins”

-Dr. John H. Walton

“Therefore, it is fruitless to be concerned with what was materially made on what day, because the text is not concerned with that aspect of creation.”

-Dr. John H. Walton

“The creation act should be compared to the process of turning a house into a home. It’s about preparing the world for God to reside in it and us being His honored guests.”

-Dr. John H. Walton

“The Hebrew word bara’ (create) never occurs in a context in which materials are mentioned. It occurs 48 times in the Old Testament and is always a divine action with God as the subject.”

-Dr. John H. Walton



3 AND GOD SAID, “LET THERE BE LIGHT,” AND THERE WAS LIGHT. 4 AND GOD SAW THAT THE LIGHT WAS GOOD. AND GOD SEPARATED THE LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS. 5 GOD CALLED THE LIGHT DAY, AND THE DARKNESS HE CALLED NIGHT. AND THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING, THE FIRST DAY.



DAY 1-GOD CREATED TIME



6 AND GOD SAID, “LET THERE BE AN EXPANSE IN THE MIDST OF THE WATERS, AND LET IT SEPARATE THE WATERS FROM THE WATERS.” 7 AND GOD MADE THE EXPANSE AND SEPARATED THE WATERS THAT WERE UNDER THE EXPANSE FROM THE WATERS THAT WERE ABOVE THE EXPANSE. AND IT WAS SO. 8 AND GOD CALLED THE EXPANSE HEAVEN. AND THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING, THE SECOND DAY.



DAY 2-GOD CREATED WEATHER



11 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.”... 12 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. 13 AND THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING, THE THIRD DAY.



DAY 3-GOD CREATED
AGRICULTURE



DAY 4-GOD CREATED DIVISIONS
OF TIME



DAY 5-GOD CREATED ANIMAL
PURPOSES FOR AIR AND SEA



DAY 6-GOD CREATED MAN'S ROLE
IN RELATION TO ANIMAL'S ROLE



DAY 7-GOD ENTERS THE TEMPLE
AND BEGINS HIS REIGN

THE COSMOS IS GOD'S TEMPLE

- The ancient civilizations would have understood the creation text as a creation of a temple process, albeit on a cosmological scale.

Isaiah 66:1-Thus says the Lord:

“Heaven is my throne,

and the earth is my footstool;

what is the house that you would build for me,

and what is the place of my rest?

THE COSMOS IS GOD'S TEMPLE

- The tabernacle, then the Temple would be microcosms of the cosmos Temple.
- Eden served as a “Holy of Holies” in the cosmos Temple.

SO, IS THE BIBLICAL CREATION STORY A MYTH?

- Yes, in the proper meaning of “myth”, and no in the commonly held meaning of “myth.”
- “Mythology in the ancient world played the role that science plays in our modern world-it contained the explanation of how the world came into being and how it worked.” (*Genesis*, 83).
- Mythology focused on identifying function according to purpose
- Science focuses on “identifying function according consequence of structure and attempts to understand cause and effect based on natural laws that are linked to the structure of a phenomenon.” (*Genesis*, 83).

*Remember: the ancient world did not
separate natural occurrence from
divine impact.*

IN SUMMARY:

- There is no argument amongst the three main Christian viewpoints (YEC, OEC, EC) that God created the universe.
- The creation story in Genesis is a telling of God putting function and purpose into that which was chaotic.
- If we read modern scientific understanding into the text, we make the mistake of being authoritative over the text.

IN SUMMARY:

- By understanding the creation story in its proper context, the friction between science and Christianity becomes less of an issue.
- Keep this in mind: scientific discovery was actually promoted by Christianity in order to find out how God made things.
- Science cannot prove the existence of God, but can point to the way to Him.
- The “who” and “why” of the creation story strongly supersedes the “how”.