

Creation Basics

**Understanding the Biblical
Doctrines of Creation and the
Flood**



By Pastor John Feakes

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Introduction

“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”
- Hebrews 11:3

The biblical doctrines of Creation and the Flood are the most scoffed at, repudiated doctrines in all of Scripture. Many Christians, even the most capable philosophers, theologians, and apologists are unsure of how to best understand Genesis 1-11. This confusion, however, is not because the Bible is unclear on the topic. Rather, it is because the church's loyalties have become seriously divided.

Many Christians have become convinced that the popular opinions of the scientific community have as much—and in some cases even more—authority than God's infallible word. Often, when scientific opinion conflicts with clear and unambiguous biblical *narrative*, the biblical text is regarded as allegory, parable, or outright myth.

This is tragic because the straightforward reading of the early chapters of the Bible establishes a solid historical and theological foundation for quite a number of precious New Testament doctrines (notably, the doctrines of sin and salvation). This is precisely why the plain reading of the text must be defended and it is to this end that this little book was written. **To God be the glory!** J.F.

Creation Basics #1 Setting the Stage: The Controversy in Brief

Central Passage: Exodus 20:8-11

God made the world in six days; this set the pattern of work and rest in Israel as part of the Mosaic Law. According to Genesis, God created time, space, earth, water, and light on day one. On day two He created the atmosphere. On day three He created the dry land and the plants. He created the heavenly bodies on day four, the sea creatures and birds He created on day five. On the sixth day He created the land animals and finally man.

The genealogies in Genesis link the fathers to their sons in a unique and precise mathematical way. The author did not intend for us to see hundreds or thousands of years between names. The biblical data therefore indicate that the earth cannot be more than 10,000 years old. This view was seriously challenged in the early 19th century by those who were convinced that current physical processes alone were sufficient to understand earth history. The Bible, however, soundly refutes this strict uniformitarianism.

Ecclesiastes 8:16-9:1 Revelation is essential to knowledge (especially knowledge about the past!)

John 3:11-12; 5:46-47 Christ's word is truthful and self-authenticating. He endorsed the writings of Moses (author of Genesis) and insisted that we must believe even the "earthly" things in Scripture.

Creation Basics #2

The Genesis Record Part One

Central Passage: Genesis 1:1-31

Genesis chapter one reads like historical narrative. Some, intending to harmonize the Bible with “millions of years,” suggest that there may be time “gaps” in the chronology. Not only are these gaps not obvious, they are not permitted by the Hebrew text. Hebrew scholars can attest to this fact.

Some suggest that the creation days may have been long periods of time. The Hebrew word for “day” (*yom*) *does* have a variety of meanings. To determine the *right* meaning we must look at the context. In Genesis 1 the word appears with the phrase “evening and morning” and a number (day one, day two, etc.). Numbers chapter 7 contains a parallel. Here the author describes what events occurred on which numbered days. If the days are literal days, then so are the days of creation. Furthermore, God could have told us that He made the world in six long periods of time if He wanted to; the Hebrew language contains the right terms (Joshua 24:7; 2 Chronicles 15:3; Ecclesiastes 3:1).

God was very concerned that we understand these words. He instructed Joshua to record them “very plainly” (Deuteronomy 27:8). As a Hebrew friend of mine once said, this means “idiot proof!”

What about Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8? These verses have nothing to do with the creation. They are merely telling us that God is not limited by time. He is the everlasting God (Psalm 90:2), the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity (Isaiah 57:15).

Creation Basics #3 Genesis Record Part Two

Central Verse Passage: Genesis 1:26-31

The text is crystal clear on the topic: God made a “very good” world, free of bloodshed and death. We are told explicitly that all the original creatures were peaceful vegetarians. Man was made king over the created order, the animals were subject to him.

God gave man and his wife one restriction, namely, they were not to eat from a particular tree in the garden (Genesis 2:16-17). The penalty was death, which, in the Bible, signifies *separation*. When one dies physically, his body has become defunct and there is a separation of his soul/spirit from it. Spiritual death means separation from God, who is the source of all goodness and well-being. The Bible says that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

In Genesis 3:1-7 we read that man and his wife marched headlong into sin and rebellion against their Creator. This catastrophe was the worst the world will ever know. Through Adam’s sin death saturated the world (Romans 5:12). When the king of creation fell, the whole creation fell too (Romans 8:19-23). There is good news, however.

Jesus paid for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3). He has furthermore promised a future restoration (Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:29-30; Acts 3:21). Note, however, that neither Christ’s death nor the promises of further restoration make any sense if death was here before Adam sinned.

Creation Basics #4

The Genesis Record Part Three

Central Passages: Genesis 6:11-13; 7:17-24

The Flood was obviously worldwide in extent. What does this matter? Because the earth's geological features are either evidence of uniform processes over long periods of time, or they are evidence for the flood. "Old-earthers" understand the problem, so they insist that the flood was only a local event. Is this view reasonable? Consider that:

The flood was 371 days long! That seems too long to describe a local event.

The Ark was huge. Why would Noah need to build an ark anyway? He could have just moved. Why would he need to collect birds? They could have easily flown away from a local disaster.

God promised he would never send a flood like that again (Genesis 9:8-17). He even set His rainbow in the sky as the sign of His covenant promise. Was this promise a lie? (we have had many local floods since then).

In Matthew 24:36-39 and 2 Peter 3:3-7 both Jesus and Peter understand that the coming worldwide judgment is a parallel to the worldwide judgment in the days of Noah. Back in Noah's time man's only salvation was the ark that God designed. Today, salvation comes only through the Lord Jesus, who, like the ark, was lifted up between heaven and earth (Genesis 7:17; John 12:32-33).

Creation Basics #5 The New Testament Record

The New Testament is replete with references to the first 11 chapters of Genesis. It is clear that the Lord Jesus and His disciples saw Genesis as straightforward historical narrative. For instance, in **Mark 10:1-9**, the Lord responded to the Pharisees' questions regarding marriage by referring them to Genesis 1 and 2. In **Mark 10:6** the Lord stated that "from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." This statement is inconsistent with all but a straightforward reading of Genesis.

The apostle Paul is arguably the greatest theologian in church history. It is very clear from his writings that he regarded Genesis as real history. Moreover, he saw that history as foundational to the New Testament doctrines of sin and salvation. In **Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15**, he explained that the first Adam brought sin and death into the world whereas the Last Adam (Jesus) brought righteousness and life. Also see **1 Timothy 2:13-14**. Certainly Paul saw Adam and Eve as the actual progenitors of the human family.

Hebrews 9:24-26 explains that sin entered the world at the beginning of the world, not millions of years later. According to **Matthew 18:7** the world is suffering anguish because of sin (see **Romans 8:20-22**). It is not because God chose to use some kind of evolutionary process that involved millions of years of suffering and death. Death, after all, is an enemy. The Bible goes on to assure us that this fearsome enemy will one day be utterly destroyed (**1 Corinthians 15:26**; **Revelation 21:4**).

Creation Basics #6 Christ the Creator

Central Verse Passage: John 1:1-3

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). The New Testament makes it clear that the pre-incarnate Christ was the actual divine agent that did the creating. This is reinforced in **Colossians 1:15-17** and **Hebrews 1:1-3**.

Most people today have been evolutionized in their thinking; they feel that everything can be—indeed must be—explained by some evolutionary *process*. This is of course contrary to the Genesis record, which states that God created distinct things suddenly, supernaturally, instantaneously. When the Creator became incarnate, he performed numerous miracles that showed His ability to give things *the appearance of a history they didn't have*. For instance, in **John 2:1-11** the Lord changed water into wine instantly. In **John 6:1-13**, He multiplied fish and loaves to feed thousands of hungry people. Surely he was able to fill the oceans with fish and the land with fruit-bearing trees as Genesis says! **John 5:1-5** documents how Jesus healed a man who had been crippled for 38 years. The man was suddenly able to walk without the slightest hint that he had once been crippled. In **John 9:1– 9** the Lord gave sight to a man who had been born blind. So complete was this miracle that the religious leaders refused to believe he was once blind. They, like the modern evolutionist, were themselves blinded by their presumption that all things are the result of a lengthy process. Christ's miracles demonstrate just how wrong they were.

Creation Basics #7

Science: Foundations, Value, and Limitations

Foundations:

Legitimate scientific investigation depends upon there being some *objective standards* (the right way to proceed, what constitutes real proof or evidence, the rules of right reason). We must also be informed as to what those standards are (authoritative revelation). Furthermore, we must have some guarantee that natural processes have, and will continue to, unfold in a generally uniform way; *the uniformity of nature, however, cannot be proved; it must be assumed*. Only by assuming uniformity can we begin drawing general conclusions from our specific observations.

Lastly, we must have good reason to think that we are capable of learning true things about the world. Apart from a faith commitment to the Christian God who guarantees these things, there just is no good reason to assume them. In fact, *without God, chance would be ultimate*; literally anything could happen (or could've happened) for any or no reason. In a world like that, knowledge would be impossible.

God alone can and does provide us with the necessary “preconditions of intelligibility.” For this reason, we may say that the strongest proof for the existence of God is that without Him, we couldn’t prove anything!

Value:

Apart from the transcendental type argument just advanced, what is found in the natural world—in cosmology, astronomy, geology, paleontology, anthropology, and biology for instance—certainly squares well with the straightforward reading of the Bible. For instance, virtually all scientists agree that the universe is not eternal but had a beginning. This agrees with the biblical record (Genesis 1:1).

A strong scientific case for the Bible, based on the evidence, can and has been advanced, and God has used just this kind of argumentation to lead people to a saving knowledge of Himself.

Limitations:

Evidence is “worldview specific;” everything we see is interpreted in light of what we already take to be true. The Christian interprets the world according to the Bible, some interpret the world according to Darwin. Sometimes scientific arguments help to persuade people, sometimes not. The Christian can show the non-believer’s worldview inconsistent and irrational, but only God can convert him. With rational and respectful argumentation the believer can close the non-believer’s mouth, but only God can open His heart!

Appendix One: 12 Reasons to Take Genesis as Written

1. That is what the language demands. Numerous experts in biblical Hebrew attest to this fact.

2. Reinterpreting Genesis calls the whole Bible into question. If one of the clearest passages can be reinterpreted for no linguistic or theological reason then no part of the Bible can be trusted. This cannot be the case (Proverbs 30:5; Psalm 119:160).

3. If millions of years are added to the Bible (to account for ancient fossils) then God would have been needlessly cruel. Why would the God who is love use millions of years of death and suffering to create the world when He could have done it like Genesis says He did? The Bible states that the righteous care for their animals (Proverbs 12:10).

4. Adam had a strange dominion if the majority of the animals God had created were extinct by the time he was created (or evolved). So far from his being the king over the created order (Psalm 8), he would have been a superintendent of an enormous cemetery filled with the remains of animals he would never see alive.

5. According to the biblical record, the Flood was clearly worldwide in extent. The geological data are either confirming or disconfirming of this claim. If we accept millions of years, then the flood must be

regarded as either local or fictitious. Neither option is acceptable to the Bible-believing Christian.

6. The order of creation events is clear and not to be denied. Those who believe in millions of years insist that the events occurred in the exact reverse order. Who should we trust on this question, the Creator Himself or fallen, error-prone men?

7. Old-earth views nullify the cross. If death was here from the beginning, as old-earth advocates maintain, then Christ's death atoned for nothing. Clearly, compromise positions make the cross of Christ "of no effect" (1 Corinthians 1:17).

8. If death was here from the beginning then the Bible's many promises of restoration are practically meaningless.

9. Genesis is clear and God cannot lie – (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18)

10. Genesis is God's word and God is fully able to communicate (Psalm 33:11).

11. The New Testament demands a straightforward reading of Genesis. Its authors clearly understood Genesis as clear, historical narrative.

12. Reinterpreting Genesis weakens the defense of our faith. Non-believers are quick to point out the inconsistencies within a Christian faith that does not see Genesis as straightforward historical narrative.

Appendix Two: Scientific Evidence for a Youthful World

Evidence from Astronomy

Galaxy shape—The insides of spiral galaxies spin faster than their outsides. If they were billions of years old, they would be featureless discs of stars, not the beautiful spirals we observe today.

Too Few Super Nova Remnants —Stars in our galaxy explode about once every 25 years. Debris should be visible for about a million years. Only about 200 debris fields are visible, a number consistent with the biblical age of the universe.

Comets—With every orbit around the sun, a comet loses mass; after 10,000 years it should be completely disintegrated. The existence comets is good evidence of a youthful solar system.

Jupiter and Saturn heat loss—Both planets radiate twice as much heat as they receive from the sun. After billions of years they should be much cooler.

Nitrogen loss from Pluto—Pluto is losing nitrogen quickly. This process could not have been going on for billions of years

Magnetic Fields—the strengths of the planets' magnetic fields and their decay rates are consistent with a solar system thousands of years old.

Lunar Geological Activity—If the moon were billions of years old, it ought to be a cold, dead rock by now. It is actually very geologically active.

Lunar Recession—Every year the moon moves further away from the earth. If we spin the clock backwards, the maximum age for the earth-moon system is less than billions of years.

Evidence from Geology

Erosion rates—Current erosion rates suggest that the continents should have been eroded down to sea level five times since the dinosaurs were here. Why is there so much fossil-bearing rock around?

Sediment accumulation in the oceans—If the earth were billions of years old there should be much more sediment on the ocean floor. There is only about 14 million years worth (Maximum age).

Strata—Rock layers (strata) are said to be the product of millions of years of slow deposition. They show evidence, however, of being laid down quickly by water. These strata are often horizontal and show no chemical or physical erosion. Some fossils span several layers of rock. In some places all the layers suddenly bend upward almost 90 degrees without cracking. Some layers contain surface features like raindrops, ripple marks or footprints. Obviously these layers were laid down quickly by water. Some layers cover enormous tracts of land, even extending across the ocean!

Evidence from Paleontology

Fossils—Fossils are the mineralized remains of creatures once alive. Fossilization involves rapid burial in mineral-rich sediment in the presence of running water. The exact conditions produced by the Genesis Flood.

Soft Tissues in Fossils—since the 1990's scientists have been aware of soft tissues and even blood cells in fossil animals thought to be millions of years old. Such discoveries indicate clearly that these creatures lived thousands—not millions—of years ago.

Living Bacteria—Living bacteria have been found in many fossil remains originally thought to be millions of years old. Again, such discoveries totally invalidate the original age estimates.

Evidence from Anthropology

Population Growth Rates—The average human population growth rate since recorded history fits nicely with the Bible's account of creation and the flood. To hold to the evolution story, one must posit a population growth unlike anything we've seen.

Too Few Human Remains—if man has been here as long as the evolution story says (100,000 to 200,000 years), the upper most layers of the earth should be chock full of human remains. Clearly they are not. The human race appears young.

Recorded history—Written history only extends back about 5,000 years. This is incongruent with the evolution story but fits the biblical account well.

Flood legends—today there are about 300 ancient flood stories known to anthropologists. These stories contain remarkable similarities to the Flood story in Genesis, even though the people that told them were separated by oceans and mountains. The presence of so many Flood stories is precisely what one would expect if the Flood described in Genesis actually occurred.

Appendix Three: Radiometric Dating

Radiometric dating is the most commonly referred to evidence of an old earth. Many who cite these dating techniques in defense of an old earth have no idea how they work or the theories behind them. C-14 dating involves measuring the ratio between stable C-12 and radioactive C-14 in a sample. The idea is simple: C-12 exists in the atmosphere along with C-14 (which is unstable and falling apart). Both combine with oxygen to form CO₂. CO₂ then enters the food chain and becomes a part of animal and plant tissue. As long as the animal or plant is alive, the C-14 lost through decay is replenished and the ratio of C-12 to C-14 remains the same as in the environment. As soon as the creature dies, the C-14 lost is not replenished and the ratio begins to change. Knowing how fast decay happens allows scientists to determine when the creature died. This type of dating technique can

only take us back to around 50,000. Even if this technique were reliable, It cannot show the earth to be billions of years old. This may sound reasonable but there are some assumptions. We must assume that the sample has not been contaminated and that we know what the ratio of C-12 to C-14 was in the past. We must also assume that the rate of decay has been constant. The technique assumes the earth is old and that the Flood never occurred (since the Flood would have altered the carbon inventory on earth). There is no way we can or should assume such things.

The other form of radiometric dating involves not once living things (as in C-14 dating), but volcanic rocks. The lava from volcanoes contains unstable, radioactive material such as uranium. As the lava cools and becomes solid rock, the uranium in the rock decays into lead. Scientists watching the process think they know how long it takes. By comparing the amount of uranium (parent isotope) to lead (daughter isotope) they conclude that some rocks are millions of years old. As with C-14 dating, the technique involves making many unprovable assumptions. For instance, we must assume that the rate of decay has remained the same the entire time. Recent discoveries have shown that this key assumption is untenable. It is now almost certainly the case that radioactive decay was much faster in the past. If so, radiometric dating is not a reliable "geochronometer." Worldwide physical processes, some of which were just mentioned, are *better* techniques, and they indicate an earth thousands of years old.

Additional Resources

Recommended Books:

Brown, Walter. *In the Beginning: Compelling Evidence for Creation and the Flood*, Copyright © Center for Scientific Creation, 8th ed., 2008

Lisle, Jason. *The Ultimate Proof of Creation: resolving the origins debate*. Green Forrest, AK: Master Books, 2009.

Lubenow, Marvin. *Bones of Contention*, Revised and Expanded. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.

Meyer, Stephen. *Signature in the Cell*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2009.

Morris, John D. *The Young Earth, Revised and Expanded*. Green Forrest, AK: Master Books, 2000.

Peterson, Denis R. *Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation*. Alachua, FL: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 2002.

Sarfati, Jonathan. *Refuting Compromise*. Green Forrest, AK: Master Books, 2004.

Sarfati, Jonathan. *Refuting Evolution*. Green Forrest, AK: Master Books, 1999.

Sarfati, Jonathan. *Refuting Evolution 2*. Green Forrest, AK: Master Books, 2002.

Recommended Websites

CreationScience.com; AnswersInGenesis.org;
Creation.com; ICR.org; Setterfield.org;
DetectingDesign.com; CreationResearch.org

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