



Lesson 10

Creation vs. Evolution—Part II

Apologetics Press Intermediate Christian Evidences Correspondence Course

CREATION VS. EVOLUTION—PART II

DOES THE BIBLE LEAVE ROOM FOR EVOLUTION?

Let's face it. It is a very unpopular idea in science to suggest that God created the Universe. And it is even more unpopular to suggest that He did it in six literal, 24-hour days. After all, according to many scientists the Universe took billions of years to form, and thus in their view it would be preposterous to believe that it was created in just six days. As a result of high-pressure scientific intimidation, and because of the popular prevailing idea of an ancient Cosmos, many people have tried to find ways to fit evolution and its billions-of-years time frame into the biblical account of Creation. In essence, they want to continue to say that they believe in God and the Bible as His Word, but they also want to say that they believe in certain portions of evolutionary theory as well. As the old saying goes, they want to “have their cake and eat it, too.” So the question arises: Can both the Bible and evolution be true? [The standard textbook definition of evolution excludes God since it states that: (a) the Universe is self-contained (and thus could not have been created by any outside force); and (b) evolution itself is a completely natural process. Therefore, those who claim to believe in both evolution and the Bible generally are known as “theistic evolutionists.” Theistic (which derives from *theos*, the Greek word for God) evolution is the view which suggests that God started the process and then let evolution take over from there.]

The first two chapters of the Bible reveal how God—in six days—created the heavens, the Earth, and all of the animals, plants, and humans that existed. Exodus 20:11 sums it up like this: “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.” The Bible clearly states that **everything** in the Universe, whether in the heavens or on the Earth, was created in those six days. And so it is here that the Bible and evolution encounter their first major conflict. Evolution claims that everything in the Universe came into being by a slow, gradual process that took billions of years; the Bible states that it took only six days. Obviously, both concepts cannot be true.

In order to accommodate the Bible to an evolutionary scheme, billions of years somehow must be inserted into the biblical record. But where, exactly, can this vast amount of time be placed to guarantee such antiquity? There are only three possible options. The time needed to guarantee an old Earth might be placed: (a) before the creation week; (b) during the creation week; or (c) after the creation week. Let us explore each of these options.

Time Before the Creation Week: The Gap Theory

Those who attempt to place the billions of years necessary for evolution **before** the creation week generally advocate what has come to be known as the Gap Theory. This theory suggests that a vast “gap” of time (of billions of years) should be inserted between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. During this time God supposedly created a fully functional Earth complete with animals, plants, and even humans who lived before Adam. That creation, the theory suggests, was destroyed as the result of a rebellion fomented on Earth by Satan. The raging war between Satan and God supposedly left this planet “without form and void” (Genesis 1:2), which, it is claimed, accounts for the myriad of fossils present in the Earth. Then, starting in Genesis 1:2, God “re-created” (or “restored”) the Earth in six literal, 24-hour days. Thus, Genesis 1 is the story of an original, perfect creation, a judgment and ruination (the Earth in its “without form and void” state), and a re-creation.

While at first glance this may appear to be an alluring theory, it cannot possibly be true if the biblical record is taken at face value. First, the Gap Theory blatantly contradicts Exodus 20:11: “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.” If God made **everything** in six days, how many things did He make before those days? The answer, of course, is none.

Second, there is no biblical evidence whatsoever to substantiate the claim that Satan’s rebellion against God took place on the Earth. The idea of a so-called cataclysm that destroyed the initial Earth is not supported by an appeal to Scripture, but instead is a concept that has been imposed on Scripture from outside sources by those attempting to defend the necessity and validity of the Gap Theory.

Finally, the Gap Theory is false because it implies that humans died before Adam and Eve. The inspired apostle Paul observed that death entered this world as a result of Adam’s sin (1 Corinthians 15:21; Romans 5:12; 8:20-22). Paul also stated that Adam was **the first man** (1 Corinthians 15:45). Yet, if the Gap Theory is correct, there existed a band of sinful people who lived many years before Adam. Additionally, Moses recorded in Genesis 1:31 that everything God had created was “very good”—a very strained interpretation if the Earth and its inhabitants already had been destroyed. The simple fact of the matter is that Paul and the Gap Theory cannot both be right.

A word of caution is in order here, however. In their attempts to oppose evolution and to make the case for the biblical account of origins, some creationists (who no doubt are well intentioned) have misinterpreted, and thus misapplied, the teachings of two important New Testament passages. The first of those passages is Romans 5:12-14.

Therefore, just **as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin**, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

The second passage is 1 Corinthians 15:20-22:

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since **by man came death**, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

The portions of these two verses (shown in bold type) that are emphasized by certain creationists stress the fact that **death entered the world as a result of man's sin**. The argument set forth, therefore, is as follows. Gap theorists suggests that there were billions of years of happenstance, contingency, incredible waste, **death**, pain, and horror after God's initial creation. The Bible states quite specifically, however, that human death did not exist until Adam and Eve sinned against God. The Gap theorist's scenario, therefore, is apodictically impossible, because it requires the death of untold thousands of species of plants, animals, and humans.

But is it correct to say that there was **absolutely no death of any kind** prior to Adam and Eve's sin? No, it is not. To say that there was no **human** death prior to the fall of man is to make a perfectly biblical statement. The passages in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15 make that crystal clear. However, using those same scriptures to suggest that not even plants or animals could die ignores the specific context of each of the passages and is a serious abuse of the texts under consideration. Paul's presentation in Romans 5:12-14 and 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 had nothing whatsoever to do with the death of either plants or animals. Rather, an examination of the two passages reveals that, **in the context**, he was discussing **only the death of humans**—a death which resulted from the tragic events that transpired in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve's willful sin.

Time During the Creation Week: The Day-Age Theory

Because of the dismal failure of the Gap Theory to provide an adequate means of inserting billions of years into the Genesis record, some have suggested that perhaps the days discussed in Genesis 1 were not literal 24-hour periods but instead were long eons of times during which evolution could have taken place (a concept known as the Day-Age Theory). After all, we are told, the word translated "day" in Genesis can have up to seven different meanings, and on rare occasions even can refer to a long period of time. Thus, according to proponents of the Day-Age Theory, the creation week was seven long spans of time that consisted of millions or billions of years each. Is that the case? How long were the days of the creation week, really?

A straightforward reading of the text in Genesis 1 indicates that Moses wanted his readers to understand, in no uncertain terms, that the six days of creation were literal 24-hour periods. The available evidence reveals several reasons why we can know that these days were not millions or billions of years, but rather were approximately the same kind of days we experience currently. First, whenever the Hebrew word translated as “day” (*yom*) is preceded by a numeral (in non-prophetic passages such as Genesis 1), it **always** carries the meaning of a 24-hour day. Second, whenever the word “day” appears in the plural form (*yamim*) in non-prophetic literature, it **always** means a literal day. In fact, the Old Testament uses *yamim* in this manner more than 700 times, and it always means a literal day in its non-prophetic usage. Therefore, when Exodus 20:11 states: “For in six **days** (*yamim*) the Lord made the heavens and the earth,” there can be absolutely no doubt that the text means six literal days.

Third, *yom* is both used and defined in Genesis 1:5. “God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. So the **evening** and the **morning** were the first day” (emp. added). The word *yom* accompanies the words “evening” and “morning” over 100 times in non-prophetic passages in the Old Testament, and each time it refers to an obvious 24-hour day.

Fourth, if the “days” of Genesis were not days at all, but long geological periods, then a problem of no little consequence arises in the field of botany. Plants came into existence on the third day (Genesis 1:9-13). If the days of Genesis 1 were long geological ages, how did the plant life survive millions of years of total darkness? Also, how would the plants that depend on insects for pollination have survived the supposed millions or billions of years between “day” three and “day” five (when insects were created)?

Fifth, while Jesus was on the Earth He taught that man and woman were here “from the beginning of creation” (Mark 10:6; cf. Matthew 19:4). Paul affirmed this same sentiment in Romans 1:20-21, where he stated that man and woman have been here “from the beginning of the creation” when they were “perceiving the things that were made.” The Day-Age Theory, on the other hand, places man at the end of billions of years of geologic time. Both cannot be true!

Sixth, in Genesis 1:14, Moses stated regarding the Sun, Moon, and stars: “Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, for days and for years.’” If the “days” were millions or billions of years, then, pray tell, what would the “years” have been?

Finally, we need to ask the question: If God had wanted us to know that He created the world in six literal days, what other words could He have used than the ones He did? Or if we wanted to explain to someone else that God

created everything in a literal six days, what words would we use? The answer, of course, is that both God and we would use the exact words that appear in Genesis 1. The author of Genesis had other ways to say that the periods were long eons of time. He could have employed the Hebrew word *dôr*, which means a long period of time. But he did not; instead he used the word day, modified it with the phrase “evening and morning,” put numerals before it, and in Exodus 20:11 made it plural. He used practically every means at his disposal to show that the days were not long periods of time but were literal 24-hour periods. Thus, the idea that the billions of years needed for evolution occurred during creation week simply cannot be defended. You can trust your Bible when it records: “For in six **days** [not six billion years—BT/EL] the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day” (Exodus 20:11).

But what about 2 Peter 3:8? Doesn’t it indicate that “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.” Isn’t this New Testament passage teaching that the days of Genesis could have been very long periods of time? No, it is not. Let us consider the passage in its appropriate context. In 2 Peter 3:8, the apostle’s discussion has nothing to do with the length of the days in Genesis 1. Rather, he is discussing the “last days” (3:3; i.e., the Christian dispensation) and Christ’s Second Coming. Some, said Peter, would suggest that since Christ had not returned already, then He was not going to return—ever! But Peter reminded his readers that God is not bound by time. He can do more in one day than humans can do in a thousand years, or, conversely, He may wait a thousand years to do what humans wish He would do in a day. Nevertheless, God keeps His promises (3:9). It is interesting to note, is it not, that from a reading of the text, God recognizes the difference between an earthly day and an earthly thousand years. It also is interesting to note that Peter did not say that a day **is** a thousand years or a thousand years **is** a day, but that a day is “**as**” a thousand years and a thousand years is “**as**” a day. God always has recognized the difference between an earthly day, month, and year. 2 Peter 3:8 proves that He is able to communicate the difference to human beings. What did He say the time periods in Genesis 1 were? Days!

After the Creation Week

We have seen that the time needed for evolution to take place cannot be placed **before** the creation week because the Bible says that God created everything in six days. We also have seen that vast amounts of time cannot be placed **during** the six days of creation because they were literal, 24-hour periods. The only possible place left for the eons of time, then, is **after** the creation week.

Those who wish to place the billions of years needed to accommodate evolutionary geology **after** the creation week are few and far between, because the Bible contains lengthy and extensive genealogies that extend all the way back to Adam. And one of the messages of those genealogies is that **man has been on the Earth since the beginning, and that beginning was not very long ago.**

In one sense, the Bible tells us exactly how old the Earth is. In Mark 10:6, Jesus stated that “from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.” How long have humans been on this Earth? Jesus said “from the beginning of the creation.” Genesis 1:26-31 explains that God chose the sixth day of the creation week to form mankind from the dust of the ground. He chose the first day to construct the Earth. Thus, the Earth is exactly five days older than humanity!

So, in order to determine the age of the Earth, we must determine how long man has been here—which is not as difficult as it may seem. Speaking in round figures, how long has it been since Jesus Christ visited the Earth? Answer: about 2,000 years. Secular history volunteers that piece of information via its designation of dates as “A.D.” (i.e., *anno Domini*, meaning “in the year of the Lord”). Next, we must determine how many years came between Jesus and Abraham. Fortunately, secular history also volunteers that figure, which turns out to be around 2,000 years. These two figures can be obtained from practically any secular history book.

The final number we must uncover is the number of years between Abraham and Adam. Once we know this figure, simple addition of the three will give us the approximate age of the Earth. Note, however, that the figure representing the period between Abraham and Adam cannot be retrieved from secular history (nor should we expect it to be!), since the Great Flood during Noah’s day destroyed most, if not all, of the records pertaining to that time period. Then how can the figure be obtained?

In Luke 3, the physician/writer listed 55 generations between Jesus and Abraham—a time frame archaeology has determined to be approximately 2,000 years. In that same chapter, Luke documented that there were only 20 generations between Abraham and Adam. But how much time, total, do those twenty generations cover? Since Genesis 5 and 11 list the ages of the fathers at the time of the births of their sons between Abraham and Adam, it is a simple matter to calculate the approximate number of years involved—a figure that turns out to be around 2,000. In chart form the information appears as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Present time to Jesus | 2,000 years |
| 2. Jesus to Abraham | 2,000 years (55 generations) |
| 3. Abraham to Adam | 2,000 years (20 generations) |

The fact that the 55 generations between Jesus and Abraham cover 2,000 years, while only 20 generations between Abraham and Adam cover the same amount of time, is explained quite easily on the basis of the vast ages of the patriarchs (like Methuselah, for example, who lived 969 years).

Some have argued that the genealogies in Genesis 5 cannot be used to demonstrate the approximate age of the Earth because they are riddled with huge gaps. But in Jude 14, the writer noted that Enoch was “the seventh from Adam” (he is listed exactly seventh in Genesis 5:21). Therefore, we know that there are no gaps between the first seven patriarchs, because Jude confirmed the accuracy of the Old Testament in this regard. That leaves only 13 generations with potential gaps between them. But in order to accommodate the evolutionary scenario which suggests that man has been on the Earth (in one form or another) approximately 3.5 million years, you would need to insert over 290,000 years between **each** of the 13 generations. It does not take a wealth of either Bible knowledge or common sense to see that this quickly becomes ludicrous. Who could believe that the first seven of these generations are so exact, while the remaining 13 contain “gaps” of over a quarter of a million years? What type of biblical exegesis is that?

While it may be true on the one hand to say that an **exact** age of the Earth is unobtainable from the information contained within the genealogies, at the same time it is important to note that—using the best information available to us from Scripture—the genealogies hardly can be extended to anything much beyond 6,000 to 7,000 years. For someone to suggest that the genealogies do not contain legitimate chronological information, or that the genealogies somehow are so full of gaps as to render them useless, is to misrepresent the case and distort the facts.

CONCLUSION

Numerous theories have been concocted to allow people to believe in evolution and yet still try to maintain a belief in the Bible as God’s Word. However, it soon becomes clear that **either** the Bible is true **or** evolution is true, but they cannot **both** be true because their teachings are contradictory. A person cannot believe both the Bible and evolution, and remain consistent. It is an “either...or” decision, not a “both...and.” Scientific theories change, but “the Word of the Lord endures forever” (1 Peter 1:25).



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Questions—Lesson 10

TRUE OR FALSE

DIRECTIONS: Write TRUE or FALSE in the blanks before the following statements.

- _____ 1. Most scientists believe that God created the Universe in six literal, 24-hour days.
- _____ 2. Jesus lived approximately 2,000 years ago.
- _____ 3. To say that there was no **human** death prior to the Fall of man is to make a perfectly biblical statement.
- _____ 4. Biblical genealogies reveal that man has been on the Earth only a few thousand years.
- _____ 5. 2 Peter 3:8 teaches that the days of Genesis 1 were actually thousands of years in length.
- _____ 6. Scientific theories are rewritten every few years, but “the Word of the Lord endures forever.”
- _____ 7. The genealogical record is full of gaps.
- _____ 8. During the Patriarchal Age, men such as Methuselah lived to be hundreds of years old.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the correct answer(s).

1. Approximately how many years expired between Adam and Abraham?
(a) 3.5 million (b) 2,000 (c) 200 (d) 200,000
2. The theory which suggests that billions of years should be placed between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.
(a) Day-Age Theory (b) Revolution Theory
(c) Gap Theory (d) Millennium Theory

3. How long does the Bible say that it took for **everything** in the Universe to be created by God?
 - (a) 1 day
 - (b) 6 days
 - (c) 6,000 years
 - (d) 3.5 million years
4. Evolution claims that everything in the Universe came into being by a gradual process that took how many years?
 - (a) Hundreds
 - (b) Thousands
 - (c) Millions
 - (d) Billions
5. The theory which suggests that the days of Creation were actually eons of time is the:
 - (a) Day-Age Theory
 - (b) Gap Theory
 - (c) Millennium Theory
 - (d) Retribution Theory

MATCHING

Match the ideas on the left with the terms or numbers on the right (place the correct letter in the space provided by each number).

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. ____ The Hebrew word which means long periods of time | A. Gap Theory |
| 2. ____ Number of generations between Jesus and Abraham | B. <i>yom</i> |
| 3. ____ Says the Earth was created and then re-created | C. An evening and morning |
| 4. ____ The Earth is about this many years old | D. <i>dôr</i> |
| 5. ____ Genesis 1:5 says the first day had these two things | E. 20 |
| 6. ____ Hebrew word for “day” | F. Day-Age Theory |
| 7. ____ Number of generations between Abraham and Adam | G. 6,000 |
| 8. ____ Suggests that the days of creation were not really days | H. 55 |

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. The time needed to ensure an old Earth might be placed: (a) _____ the creation week; (b) _____ the creation week; or (c) _____ the creation week.
2. “For in _____ days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and _____ that is in them” (Exodus 20:11).
3. The word translated “day” in Genesis can have up to _____ different meanings.
4. While Jesus was on the Earth, He taught that man and woman were here “from the _____ of creation” (Mark 10:6).
5. The Earth is exactly _____ older than humanity.

NOTES/COMMENTS

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