

THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF BELIEVING IN RECENT CREATION

by Henry M. Morris *

Those of us who still believe not only that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, but also that God intended it to be understood by ordinary people (not just by scholarly specialists in science or theology) have been labeled "young-earth creationists."

We did not choose that name for ourselves, but it is true that, since we believe that God is capable of saying what He means and means what He says, we have to believe that the whole creation is far younger than evolutionists can accept.

It would be much more comfortable for us *not* to believe in a young earth of course. Not only are the entire scientific and educational establishments committed to "old-earth evolutionism," but so also are the supposedly more intellectual segments of the religious world. The seminaries and colleges of the so-called mainline denominations have almost all capitulated to "theistic evolutionism," and most evangelical colleges and seminaries espouse "old-earth creationism," or what many call "progressive creationism."

So "young-earth creationism" is not a comfortable position to hold, especially for scientists or ambitious stu-

dents, and it would be tempting either to give it up (as many have, under the persuasive influence of such winsome speakers as Hugh Ross, Robert Gange, and other popular evangelicals) or else just to say it really doesn't matter how or when God created (as do most modern churches and para-church organizations), as long as we believe that He is our Creator.

But it *does* matter, and that is why ICR was formed in the first place almost thirty years ago. Our very statement of faith specifies this position. In this article, therefore, I want to reemphasize once again why it is vitally important to continue to believe, as our Christian forefathers did, that "in six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day" (Exodus 20:11).

Implications of the Old Earth Position

It is obvious that belief in a 4.6 billion-year-old earth and a 15 billion-year-old universe did not come from the Bible, for there is not a hint of evolution or long geological ages anywhere in the Bible. My book, *Biblical Creationism*, for example, examines

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every relevant verse in every book of the Bible, and there is no suggestion anywhere of the geological or astronomical ages that are widely assumed today. The concepts of evolution and an infinitely old cosmos are often found in the ancient pagan religions, but never in the original Judaeo-Christian literature.

Therefore, Christians who want to harmonize the standard geological/astronomical age system with Scripture must use eisegesis, not exegesis, to do so. That is, they have to try to interpret Scripture in such a way as to make it fit modern scientism. We believe on the other hand, that the only way we can really honor the Bible as God's inspired Word is to assume it as authoritative on all subjects with which it deals. That means we must use the Bible to interpret scientific data, not use naturalistic presuppositions to direct our Bible interpretations.

Those who choose the latter course, however, embark on a very slippery slope that ends in a precipice. For if the long geological ages really took place, that means there were at least a billion years of suffering and death in the animal kingdom before the arrival of men and women in the world. Each geological "age" is identified by the types of dead organisms now preserved as fossils in the rocks of that age, and there are literally billions of such fossils buried in the earth's crust. This fact leads to the following very disturbing chain of conclusions, as follows:

1. God is not really a God of grace and mercy after all, for He seems to have created a world filled with animals suffering and dying for a billion years, and He did so for no apparent reason whatever, assuming that His ultimate goal was to create human beings for fellowship with Himself.

2. The Bible is not really an au-

thoritative guide, for if it is wrong in these important matters of science and history, which we supposedly can check for ourselves, using the usual criteria of scientific and historical investigation, then how can we trust it in matters of salvation, heaven, and everlasting life, which we have *no* means of verifying scientifically? "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not," said Jesus, "how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12).

3. Death is not really the wages of sin, as the Bible says, for violence, pain, and death reigned in the world long before sin came in. God is directly responsible for this cruel regime, not Adam. Furthermore, when God observed the completed creation of "everything that He had made . . . the heavens and the earth . . . and all the host of them . . . He pronounced it all to be *very good*" (Genesis 1:31; 2:1). This seems to imply that God is sadistic, taking pleasure in observing the suffering and dying of His creatures.

4. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ was our Creator before He became our Savior (John 1:1-3,10; Colossians 1:16; etc.). But Christ thought that it was "from the beginning of the creation" (not billions of years *after* the beginning of the creation) that "God made them male and female" (Mark 10:6), quoting from the record of the creation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:27). If He had really been there at the beginning, He would have known better. Furthermore, if God had really created a world of nature "red in tooth and claw," leading to "the survival of the fittest," how is it that His Son later taught His followers that "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it" (Mark 8:35), and that they should love their enemies and "do good to them that hate you" (Matthew 5:44).

5. Still more significantly, if physi-

cal human death was not really an important part of the penalty for sin, then the agonizingly cruel *physical* death of Christ on the cross was not necessary to pay that penalty, and thus would be a gross miscarriage of justice on God's part.

6. This would lead us to conclude further that we have no real Savior. Christ is no longer here on Earth, but sin and death are still here, so the promises in the Bible concerning future salvation seem to have been just empty rhetoric. If God's Word was wrong about creation and about the meaning of Christ's death, it becomes obvious that its prophecies and promises concerning the future are of no value either.

7. Finally, there remains no reason to believe in God at all—at least not in the personal, loving, omniscient, omnipotent, holy, righteous God that the Bible makes Him out to be. If *that* kind of God really existed, He would never have created the groaning, suffering, dying world implied by the long ages required for evolution. If suffering and death in the world—especially the suffering and death of Christ—are not the result of God's judgment on sin in the world, then the most reasonable inference is that the God of the Bible does not exist. The slippery slope of compromise finally ends in the dark chasm of atheism, at least for those who travel to its logical termination.

Where We Must Stand

Therefore, no matter how much more convenient it would be to adopt the old-earth approach or the "doesn't matter" approach, we cannot do it. We could have more speaking engagements, more book sales, larger crowds, and better acceptance even by the evangelical Christian world if we would just take the broad road, but we cannot do it.

The Bible *is* the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of the living gracious, omnipotent Creator and the Lord Jesus Christ *is* our crucified and risen Savior, and all the *real* facts of science and history support these truths.

On the other hand, there is *no* genuine scientific evidence for evolutionism. No true evolution from one kind of organism to a more complex kind has ever been observed in all human history, and there is no *recorded* history beyond the six thousand or so years of Biblical history. Any alleged earlier ages have to be postulated on the discredited assumption of uniformitarianism. Even if such imaginary ages ever existed, they left no credible fossil records of real evolutionary transitions among the billions of fossils preserved in the rocks.

What the fossils *do* show is *death*—rapid death and burial, in fact, or else they would not have been preserved at all. And death speaks of sin and judgment, not evolution and long ages. Pain and death are not "good" things, and a loving God would not call them good. They are instead, "the wages of sin" (Romans 6:23). This judgment by our all-holy Creator necessarily fell on Adam and his descendants and also on all the "dominion" over which God had placed him in charge.

In the new earth which God in Christ will create after sin is finally purged out of this groaning creation, however, "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain" (Revelation 21:4). Once again, God's creation will all be "*very good!*"

In the meantime, we do well to continue to believe His Word just as it stands. God forbid that we should ever "love the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43). 🛡️

DOES THE CREATION WORLDVIEW HELP IN TIME OF GRIEF?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.

Tragedy struck on January 31, 2000, when Alaska Airlines Flight 261 crashed into the Pacific Ocean off the southern California coastline near Ventura. All 88 people on board perished. On May 4, in concert with Ventura's 27th annual Day of Prayer, Residents and community leaders of the area gathered to remember the dead, honor those whose rescue efforts turned to recovery efforts, and bring closure to the episode for the many residents whose lives intertwined with grieving loved ones. As featured speaker, I was asked to put the tragedy into a larger perspective.

As always, creation thinking provides the answers. The creation/evolution controversy boils down to a war between two worldviews, the naturalistic, evolutionary worldview, or the theistic, creationist, Christian worldview. Which worldview is more scientific and which should dominate our schools, society, and personal thinking? Which way of thinking will better minister to those experiencing tragedy?

The evolution view proposes that only natural processes have ever occurred. There is no meaning to life other than that which we choose to give it. There is no ultimate reality, no absolute right and wrong no life after death. Furthermore, life's tragedies have been going on for hundreds of millions of years, long before man arrived. Death and pain and suffering—that's just the way things are, and it was the extinction of the less fit that allowed man to evolve. To a knowledgeable evolutionist, death is good. What comfort is that in time of grief?

Now consider the creation view. In the beginning, things were "very good" (Genesis 1:31), no death, pain, or tears, with man in perfect fellowship with his Creator. That fellowship was broken, as man rejected God's authority and disobeyed His law. Disobedience is sin, and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). The penalty of man's disobedience passed to all of creation (Romans 8:22–24), with everything in the process of death and decay (Genesis 3:19). We live in a cursed world, dominated by sin and its penalty, unable to change the situation. But understanding this is little comfort.

Thankfully, the Creator has acted to remove the dominion of death, by entering creation as a man Himself, living a sinless life for which no death penalty was demanded, and died as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of mankind. Then, He rose from the grave in victory over sin and death, offering us eternal life. He has pledged to create a "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Peter 3:13), where there will be "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain" (Revelation 22:4). At long last creation will reach and maintain God's "very good" intention for it, and those who have accepted His free gift of eternal life will be there too.

You see, to a creationist, death and pain are but temporary intrusions, brief postponements of God's ultimate plan rather than survival of the fittest. In this plan the Fit has died for the unfit, and eternity without tragedy awaits. What comfort this brings to the suffering and grief-stricken. ❀



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