

DISCUSSION 7

THE GREAT TIME QUESTIONS

Part 1: The Propositions

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OUTLINE

- 1. Introduction: The questions**
- 2. How old is the earth, the solar system, the universe?**
- 3. The Bible texts**
- 4. Interpretations of the Bible texts**
- 5. Conclusions**
- 6. Review questions**

1. INTRODUCTION: THE QUESTIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

Time is one of the **greatest sources of contention** between science and Scripture. The Bible speaks of a recent creation a few thousand years ago, evolutionists speak of billions of years for life to evolve.

God does not seem to require time, He can create the earth in just six days, a relative instant (Genesis 1); and probably much faster.

1. INTRODUCTION

Evolution needs a great deal of time and evolutionists rely heavily on time to explain the improbable events they postulate. For instance, in referring to the origin of life, Nobel Laureate George Wald expresses this reliance when he states: “Given so much time, the ‘impossible’ becomes possible, the possible probable, and the probable virtually certain. One only has to wait: time itself performs the miracles.”

1. INTRODUCTION

However, we shall see later in Part 3 of **THE GREAT TIME QUESTIONS (Discussion 9)**, that when quantitatively evaluated, the billions of years postulated for evolutionary time are **totally insufficient** to accommodate the extreme improbabilities (“miracles”) evolution faces. The molecules of life are just too specific and life too complex to have organized itself by chance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Because of the sharp contrast between the time requirement for evolution, and for God to create, it is not surprising that time is a focal point in the discussions about origins. In our discussion below, we will occasionally use the term “recent” to refer to a recent creation a few thousand years ago, and “evolutionary time,” “long ages” or “long geologic ages” to refer to millions and billions of years proposed for evolutionary time.

2. HOW OLD?:
LIFE, EARTH,
SOLAR SYSTEM,
UNIVERSE

2. HOW OLD?

How old is **life**, the **earth**, the **solar system**, and the **universe**?

Scientists now propose that the universe is around **13 billion** years old, while the Earth that is part of our solar system is postulated to be around **4.6 billion** years old.

On the other hand, the **Bible** speaks about a recent creation only a **few (six?) thousand years ago**. Different **ancient manuscripts** of the Bible imply slightly different ages, but creation is only a few thousand years ago as compared to billions postulated for evolution.

2. HOW OLD?

The **Bible** does not address directly the questions of the age of the universe, the solar system, or the earth, and we can only infer these indirectly by interpretations.

Various parts of the universe could have different ages and this complicates the picture. Some creationists believe the whole universe is only a few thousands years old. Others think only part of the universe is young, the rest is much older. Three main views within a biblical perspective are described in the next slide.

2. HOW OLD?

There are several biblical interpretations of what took place during creation week. Three main views related to time are:

- a. God created **everything**, i.e. the whole universe, recently, **in six days**, during creation week.
- b. God created **the solar system**, and all that is in it, recently, **in six days**, during creation week. The rest of the universe is very old.
- c. God **prepared the Earth and created life on the Earth**, recently, **in six days**, during creation week. The rest of the universe, including the solar system and the original matter of the Earth, is very old.

3. BIBLICAL TEXTS

3. BIBLICAL TEXTS

While the Bible does not directly address these intriguing time questions, several passages are interpreted as implying various conclusions.

Genesis 1-11. The genealogies and other related information given there seem to clearly imply that creation week was just a few thousand years ago. There is general agreement that the Bible seems to be talking about a recent creation, not billions of years ago. The Bible also seems clear that creation was in six days, each with its own evening and morning, thus meaning days about 24 hours long.

The next few slides will consider actual biblical texts and some interpretations will be given in the next section.

GENESIS 1:1-5

1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
2. And the earth was without form and void: darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
3. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
4. And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
5. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

GENESIS 1:14-19

14. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days, and years:
15. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.
16. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also.
17. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.
18. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was* good.
19. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Job 38:4, 9

4. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding.

9. When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,

[This is God speaking.]

2 Peter 3:5-6

5. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:
6. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished.

[This passage from the apostle Peter seems to be saying that at creation the Earth stood out of water, and then it was back in water, which would be during the great Genesis Flood.]

4. INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXTS

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Genesis 1:1-2. A number of scholars interpret these two verses as referring to a dark, empty Earth covered with water, that existed for a very long time before creation week. God's creation week activity for creation week begins with Genesis 1:3, which begins with "And God said," as also stated for the other creation days. Other scholars disagree.

4. INTERPRETATIONS

Genesis 1:3. This text refers to the creation of light. Some interpret this as meaning that the sun was created on the first day of creation week. Others suggest that God's presence was the light until day four. In the creation account light is facilitated on both the first and fourth day.

Genesis 1:16. This text seems to indicate that the sun and moon and possibly the stars were created on day four of creation week. Others suggest that the stars existed before that and are mentioned here only as a parenthetical statement of God's creatorship. This text is often used by those who advocate a young solar system or young universe. Those who advocate an old solar system suggest that the Earth was cloudy (Job 38:9) until day four when the sun, moon and stars became visible on day four, hence they are described then.

4. INTERPRETATIONS

Job 38:9. This text indicates that God created the Earth with clouds and that it was dark. This would seem to fit with those who interpret the first two verses of Genesis as describing an old, dark, empty Earth before creation week began.

2 Peter 3:5. Peter here speaks of an Earth being created out of water. This supports the idea that there was an original wet Earth before creation week, thus agreeing with the interpretation that Genesis 1:1-2 refers to an old wet, dark Earth here before creation week. The creation of water is not mentioned in the Genesis six day creation account, and some interpret this as meaning that the water was already present. Psalms 24:2 and 136:6 can also be interpreted this way. But some interpret Exodus 20:11 as saying that seas were created during creation week, while others say that text refers only to organizing “seas” from preexisting water by creating contrasting land as described for day three of creation week in Genesis 1:9-10. Hence, varied interpretations are possible.

**5. CONCLUSIONS
ABOUT VARIOUS
TIME
PROPOSITIONS**

5. CONCLUSIONS

In general, the scientific community strongly endorses a model that proposes that life has been on earth for billions of years. However, the long ages proposed are way too short a time to accommodate the many improbabilities of evolution such as the origin of simple life all by itself.

Improbable events are more likely to occur over a long period of time than during shorter ones. Hence the billions of years proposed are more likely to favor the unlikely improbabilities of evolution than the brief time for life on earth of just a few thousand years as suggested by the Bible. Hence, long ages are more advantageous for evolution, but still way, way too short.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Bible texts give us a choice as to a long or short age (billions or thousands of years) for the age of the universe or the solar system.

The Bible does not give us such a choice for the work of creation week which included at least the preparation of the earth for life and the creation of life on earth. Those events were just a few thousand years ago and in six days.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In a biblical context, the idea of an old universe, old solar system, and old matter of the Earth before creation week is easier to reconcile with some scientific data about the deep rocks of the earth such as some radiometric dating dates.

Also light from distant stars takes billions of years to reach Earth, so it looks as though these stars have been there for a while. However you can postulate that God created the stars recently each with its light already reaching Earth. God could easily do it.

5. CONCLUSIONS

None of the three biblical models being considered (recent life, recent solar system, or recent universe) **challenges the six day creation concept of Genesis** which describes how God prepared the Earth and created the various forms of life on Earth in six days, each with its own “evening and morning” thus indicating that these were **ordinary days**, not extended periods of time as some propose. The Genesis account (Genesis 1, 2) and the Fourth Commandment (Exodus 20:11) are **clear** on that point.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God and as such represent God's most direct communication to us. In the Fourth Commandment God asks us to keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy specifically as a memorial of His resting after a **six day** creation event.

Furthermore, if the six days in the Ten Commandments represent millions of years, as is suggested by some for the days of creation in Genesis, humans would likely not live long enough to keep even part of one Sabbath holy!

5. CONCLUSIONS

Time has been one of the most contentious issues in the controversy between science and the Bible.

While the Bible does not directly address the question of the age of the Earth, the solar system, or the universe; it clearly indicates that **creation, at least of life, was by God in six literal days, and clearly implies that creation week was recent, a few thousand, and not millions or billions of years ago.**

6. REVIEW QUESTIONS

(Answers given later below)

6. REVIEW QUESTIONS – 1

(Answers given later below)

- 1. Why is time such a contentious topic in the discussion about the Bible and contemporary scientific interpretations?**
- 2. Why are long ages of time advantageous for evolution? Is this a great advantage?**
- 3. Three different interpretations of what the Bible might infer about the age of the various parts of the universe were presented, i.e. life on earth, the solar system, or the entire universe are very young. How do these interpretations affect the idea of a six day creation week?**

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - 1

1. **Why is time such a contentious topic in the discussion about the Bible and contemporary scientific interpretations?**

It is because there is such a tremendous contrast in the time postulated for each model. Creation is in six days just a few thousand years ago, while evolution proposes a process spread over billions of years.

2. **Why are long ages of time advantageous for evolution? Is this a great advantage?**

Evolution postulates many improbable events, such as the spontaneous origin of life. The more time you have the greater the chance that these improbable events are likely to occur. However, the long ages proposed are not much help because the events proposed are so highly unlikely that the billions of years advocated are hardly any help at all.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - 2

3. Three different interpretations of what the Bible infers about the age of the various parts of the universe were presented earlier; i.e. life on earth, the solar system, or the entire universe are very young. How do these interpretations affect the idea of a six day creation week?

None of these varied interpretations affects the idea that God prepared the earth, and created the various forms of life in six days as indicated in Genesis and the Ten Commandments. The Bible does not give specific details about the age of the various parts of the universe.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

For further discussions by the author (Ariel A. Roth) and many additional references, see the author's books titled:

1. **ORIGINS: LINKING SCIENCE AND SCRIPTURE.** Hagerstown, MD. Review and Herald Publishing Association.
2. **SCIENCE DISCOVERS GOD: Seven Convincing Lines of Evidence for His Existence.** Hagerstown, MD. Autumn House Publishing, an imprint of Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Additional information is available on the author's Web Page: Sciences and Scriptures. www.sciencesandscriptures.com. Also see many articles published by the author and others in the journal **ORIGINS** which the author edited for 23 years. For access see the Web Page of the Geoscience Research Institute www.grisda.org.

Highly Recommended URLs are:

Earth History Research Center <http://origins.swau.edu>

Theological Crossroads www.theox.org

Sean Pitman www.detectingdesign.com

Scientific Theology www.scientifictheology.com

Geoscience Research Institute www.grisda.org

Sciences and Scriptures www.sciencesandscriptures.com

Other Web Pages providing a variety of related answers are: Creation-Evolution Headlines, Creation Ministries International, Institute for Creation Research, and Answers in Genesis.

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