

Why Not Billions Of Years?

Introduction. For the first 18 centuries of church history, the almost universal belief of Christians was that God created the world in six literal days, roughly 4,000 years before Christ, and destroyed the world with a global Flood in Noah's time.

But about 200 years ago some scientists developed new theories of earth history, which proposed that the earth and universe are millions (now billions) of years old. Over the past 200 years Christians have made various attempts to fit the now billions of years into the Bible. These include the day-age view, gap theory, local flood view, framework hypothesis, theistic evolution, progressive creation, and so on.

A growing number of Christians, including many scientists, hold that the young-earth view is only one truly faithful to scripture and that fits the scientific evidence far better than the reigning old-earth evolutionary theory.

Many Christians say that the age of the earth is an unimportant and divisive side issue that hinders the proclamation of the gospel. But is that really the case? This lesson will introduce you to some of the reasons Christians cannot accept the billions of years without doing great damage to the truth and the church. This truth will set us free and equip us for every good work (John 8:32; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

I. The Bible Clearly Teaches That God Created In Six Literal Days

- A. The Hebrew word for "day" in Genesis 1 is yom. In the vast majority of its uses in the Old Testament, it means a literal day; and where it doesn't the context makes this clear.
- B. Similarly, the context of Genesis 1 clearly shows that the days of creation were literal days.
 1. First, yom is defined the first time it is used in the Bible (Genesis 1:4-5) in its two literal senses: the light portion of the light/dark cycle and the whole light/dark cycle.
 2. Second, yom is used with "evening" and "morning."
 - a) Everywhere these two words are used in the Old Testament, either together or separately and with or without yom in the context, they always mean a literal evening or morning of a literal day.
 - b) No where in scripture do you find the word "day" referring to anything else than a 24 hour period when preceded by a number.
 3. Third, yom is modified with a number: one day, second day, third day, and so on, which everywhere else in the Old Testament indicates literal days.
 4. Fourth, yom is defined literally in Genesis 1:14 in relation to the heavenly bodies.
- C. That these creation days happened only about 6,000 years ago is clear from the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 (which give very detailed chronological information, unlike the clearly abbreviated genealogy in Matthew 1) and other chronological information in the Bible.

II. Exodus 20:11 Blocks All Attempts To Fit Billions Of Years Into Genesis 1

- A. This verse gives the reason for Israel to work six days and then take a Sabbath rest. Yom is used in both parts of the commandment. If God meant that the Jews were to work six days because He created over six long periods of time, He could have said that using one of three indefinite Hebrew time words.
- B. He chose the only word that means a literal day and the Jews understood it literally (until the idea of million of years developed in the early 19th century). For this reason, the day-age view or framework hypothesis must be rejected. The gap theory or any other attempt to put long periods of time before the six days are also false, because God says that in six days He made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. So He made everything in those six literal days and nothing before the first day.

III. Noah's Flood Washes Away Billions Of Years

- A. The evidence in Genesis 6-9 for a global, catastrophic flood is overwhelming.
 - 1. For example, the Flood was intended to destroy not only all sinful people but also all land animals and birds and the surface of the earth, which only a global flood could accomplish (Genesis 6:7, 13).
 - 2. The ark's purpose was to save two of every kind of land animal and bird to repopulate the earth after the flood (Genesis 6:19-20). The ark was totally unnecessary if the Flood was local. People, animals, and birds could have migrated out of the flood zone before it occurred, or the zone could have been populated from creatures outside the area after the Flood.
 - 3. The catastrophic nature is seen in the nonstop rain for at least 40 days (Genesis 7:17), which would have produced massive erosion, mud slides, hurricanes, and so on.
 - 4. The language of the passage.
 - a) "The earth," occurring 46 times in the Flood narrative, always without some limiting term, parallels the usage of the same term in the creation account (Genesis 1:1-2, 10). The text uses an indicator of the universality of the Flood at least 30 times (Genesis 6:7, 13, 17; 7:4, 13-19; 8:9; 9:11).
 - b) In each of the four occurrences of the phrase "upon the face of all the earth" in Genesis outside the Flood narrative (Genesis 1:29; 11:4, 8-9), it clearly has the universal sense of the entire land surface of the globe.
 - c) The integrity of God in keeping His promise is wrapped up in the world-wide extent of the Flood. If Genesis 6-9 describes only a local flood, then God has broken His promise every time another local flood occurs. The only way God's promise not to send another Flood to destroy every living thing (Genesis 8:21) can be seen to have been kept is if the Flood was a universal one and the whole human race outside the ark was destroyed.
 - d) There is no stronger way in the Hebrew language to express the total destruction of all existence of life on earth. If we have any respect for the Bible's integrity, or if we have any regard for the meaning of words, we cannot see a regional flood in Genesis 6-9. Therefore, if the historical Flood was truly a localized event, then the account in Genesis is nothing but a myth, and the Bible is discredited.

- B. The Hebrew words translated “the fountains of the great deep broken up” (Genesis 7:11) clearly point to tectonic rupturing of the earth’s surface in many places for 150 days (Genesis 7:24), resulting in volcanoes, earthquakes, and tsunamis.
 - 1. Noah’s Flood would produce exactly the kind of complex geological record we see today worldwide: thousands of feet of sediments clearly deposited by water and later hardened into rock and containing billions of fossils.
 - 2. If the year-long Flood (Genesis 7:11; 8:14) is responsible for most of the rock layers and fossils, then those rocks and fossils cannot represent the history of the earth over millions of years, as evolutionists claim.

IV. Jesus Was A Young-Earth Creationist

- A. Jesus consistently treated the miracle accounts of the Old Testament as straightforward, truthful, historical accounts (e.g., creation of Adam, Noah and the Flood, Lot and his wife in Sodom, Moses and the manna, and Jonah in the fish). He continually affirmed the authority of scripture over men’s ideas and traditions (Matthew 15:1-9).
- B. In Mark 10:6 we have the clearest (but not the only) statement showing that Jesus was a young-earth creationist. He states that Adam and Eve were at the beginning of creation, not billions of years after the beginning, as would be the case if the universe was really billions of years old. So, if Jesus was a young-earth creationist, then how can His faithful followers have any other view?

V. Billions Of Years Undermines The Bible’s Teachings

- A. Genesis 1 says six times that God called the creation “good” (vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25) and when He finished creation on sixth day He called everything “very good” (v. 31). But Adam and Eve sinned. Instantly Adam and Eve died spiritually, and after God’s curse they began to die physically. The serpent and Eve were changed physically and the ground itself was cursed (Genesis 3:14-19).
- B. The whole creation now lives under this curse, awaiting the final judgment where there will be no disease, suffering, or death because there will be no more curse (Revelation 21:3-5; 22:3). To accept billions of years of animal death before the creation and Fall of man contradicts and destroys the Bible’s teaching on death and the full redemptive work of Christ. It also makes God into a bumbling, cruel creator who uses (or cannot prevent) disease, natural disasters, and extinctions to mar His creative work, without any moral cause, but calls it all “very good.”

Conclusion. These are just some of the reasons why the Bible is giving us the true history of the creation. God’s word must be the final authority on all matters about which it speaks: not just the moral and spiritual matters, but also its teachings that bear on history, archeology, and science (1 Corinthians 3:18-20).

What is at stake here is the authority of scripture, the character of God, the doctrine of death, and the very foundation of the gospel. If the early chapters of Genesis are not true literal history, then faith in the rest of the Bible is undermined, including its teaching about salvation and morality. The health of the church, the effectiveness of her mission to a lost world, and the glory of God are at stake.