

Sensitive Answers to “Christian”¹ Opposition to the Big Bang

“[They] examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (Acts 17:11)

On the first page of Martin Luther’s *Lectures on Genesis*² he stated that “*Genesis* [ch. 1] is very difficult to understand.” For the sake of full disclosure, it is relevant to acknowledge that he embraced what is today known as Young-Earth Creationism (YEC), which says creation happened 6 to 10 thousand years ago (as opposed to the Old-Cosmos Creation (OCC) view which holds that creation is 13.7 billion years old). Yet Luther also insisted the **Bible is the final authority** on all matters of doctrine. Indeed, one chief emphasis of his career was to elevate the authority of the Bible above all other claimants, including tradition, pronouncements by church officials,³ and naive hear-say. Despite popular prejudices, it is not inevitable (as this paper notes) that a study of Genesis 1 will indicate a YEC view of the creation account.

The propensity to **exceed** the authority that Scripture specifies (Deut. 4:2) is both chronic and endemic for both non-Christians AND Bible-believing Christians for reason of our *self*-focused fallenness, even when we aren’t conscious of it. Similarly, in *political* matters, one core insight of the U.S. Constitution is its affirmation the rank of the judiciary is equal in status to the other two branches in order to restrain them from exceeding their *constitutional* authority. As for the *scientific* enterprise, in order for it to *thrive* practitioners must both adhere to careful *scientific* analysis and submit their results to the scrutiny of their peers in the larger scientific community. So also, the same is necessary in *Biblical* studies where St. Paul writes, “*Devote yourself to being approved by God [by] rightly handling the Word of truth*” (2 Tim. 2:15). To this end I set forth corrective replies to the following contentions:

Common Challenges to the Big Bang Followed by my Rebuttals

Claim: “I was taught by a person I respect [be that a parent or pastor or a “Ken Ham,” etc.] who insists that the Bible so *obviously* teaches YEC, it is surely heretical to even question that position.”

Reply: I obligate myself to test my OCC position against the final authority of Scripture. So likewise, it is the duty of **every** teacher, past or present, to scrutinize their views by that **same standard**.⁴ Since we are all prone to error, the only remedy to distorting Scripture is for us to **all take that same step**.

Claim: “*Answers in Genesis* (AIG) and similar organizations not only appeal to science in support of their position; they also claim that all other stripes of scientific inquiry are tainted by “evolutionary” bias.

Reply: Although AIG creates beautiful publications and movies, what they fail to do is urge people to take into consideration evidence which confutes its position. Yet a very critical aspect of the scientific method is insisting on evaluating ALL relevant evidence since that is the only possible means of sifting out failed hypotheses.⁵ Indeed one way that YEC obscures the weakness of its claims is by suppressing contrary evidence.⁶ For example, even though YECs appeal (correctly) to the claim that science proves the universe began out of nothing, they fail to mention the body of facts that are necessary to prove it

¹ The term “Christian” is in quotes because my paper argues that it is entirely valid for Christians to embrace creation through the Big Bang.

² Jaroslav Pelikan, ed. “Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5.” *Luther’s Works*, Am. ed., v. 1. (Concordia, 1958), p. 4.

³ See my paper, “A Diet of Worms and Two Plates on the Table Today,” which can be found at my website: www.christianityontheoffense.com

⁴ See both of my papers, “The Biblical Demand to Take Another Look,” and “How Genesis 1:1 Easily Accommodates the Big Bang.” Ibid.

⁵ A hypothesis is a proposed explanation made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation.

⁶ See my papers, “Genesis Movie Errors,” and “My Rebuttal of the Lutheran Witness Critique of the Big Bang,” And “Rebuttal of [YEC] Astrophysicist Jason Lysle’s Video Presentation.” Op.cit. (3).

(the expansion of the universe) for the reason that it affirms what YECs wish to deny; the Big Bang (BB).⁷ As for the last concern, there is **no connection at all** between evolution and framing the case for the BB!

Claim: “Since Scripture is *God’s* revealed word, it logically follows that **no** alternative criteria, including fallible human perspectives, has legitimate grounds on which to stand in its judgment of Biblical statements. For this reason, it is naive to judge Biblical statements against limited (human) vantage points.”

Reply: Firstly, I agree with much of the above premise. Nevertheless, it should be noted that while it is true that scientists and historians *can* be mistaken in certain cases, it is also true that YEC interpreters can err too in their view of Genesis 1. So, it is logically fallacious⁸ for YECs to base the certainty of their view of Genesis as the grounds for dismissing out of hand all other views.

Secondly, when we turn to the Bible with an open mind, what we actually discover in Rom. 1:18-20 is that St. Paul (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) **decries suppressing evidence** specifically found in nature⁹ (which is what YECs do in order to maintain their view of creation). In addition to *scientific* evidence, it should be noted that the **Bible also widely appeals to historical evidence** that affirms the facticity of the events it narrates.¹⁰ Jesus is the most prominent Biblical personage of all to appeal to observable public evidence which affirms that His self-claims are true (e.g. John 14:11).

Claim: God doesn’t need billions of years to create a universe.

Reply: This statement too is absolutely true. Yet it is also the case that He doesn’t even need 6 days to create the world. In truth God *could* have made the cosmos in either a few thousand years, or in an instant. God exists outside of time as we experience it. Scripture states that to God “*one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day*” (2 Peter 3:8). So, the age of things is inconsequential to His power. Consequently, the question before us is not what God *could* do or *should* do, but what God *has* done. I make the case that Gen. 1:1 allows room for a multi-billion-year-old universe involving no compromise of the passage at all.¹¹ Indeed it is YEC which fails to do justice to that verse.¹² In order to deny the standard age of the universe (earth as 4.5 billion years, while the universe is 13.7 billion years) one must, in violation of Rom. 1:18, reject the body of scientific evidence which clearly indicates it is ancient. The question of *why* God might have created a universe over long periods of time is not addressed definitively in Scripture. I lay out my conjecture as to *why* He *did*, in my paper, “The Biblical Demand to Take Another Look.”¹³ Although YECs insist that no purpose is served in a multi-billion year process of creation, quarrelling over that question cannot be decisive in addressing the age of creation. The bottom line is, IF He had created the heavens and the earth just a few thousand years ago, it would be reasonable to expect to find non-ambiguous indicators within nature showing that it is young. But that isn’t the case. While it is true that YECs can assemble unconnected bits of evidence which *might* imply that creation is young; in doing so they dismiss a massively **greater** body of evidence indicating **without ambiguity** geological and astronomical processes that **must have occurred over eons of time**.¹⁴

⁷ See my paper, “Was the Big Bang the Big Beginning?” Op.cit. (3).

⁸ The fallacy is known as “begging the question.”

⁹ See my papers, “Does the Bible Permit Denigrating Science in order to Maintain our Faith?” and “Romans 1:1-18.” Op.cit. (3).

¹⁰ See my papers, “How did the Early Church Grow?” and “The Pervasive Employment of Apologetics in the Bible.” Op.cit. (3).

¹¹ See my paper, “How Genesis One...” Op.cit. (4).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Op.cit. (4), pp. 7-8.

¹⁴ See my papers, “The Biblical Extent of Noah’s Flood Revisited,” and “Does the Bible Permit Denigrating Science in Order to Maintain our Faith?” Op.cit. (4).

As for us today with respect to the question of time, it is now *time* to take off our blinders and revisit this matter in freedom by returning to our highest authority, just as God's Word invites us!

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