

Young-Earth Creationism Defies the Bible's Affinity with Science¹

"Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." (Jesus in Matthew 13:16)

Despite my title, I do affirm that **young-earth creationism (YEC) is right about the Bible in one aspect**. From its premise (which I share) that **Genesis 1** is part of biblical *revelation*,² it follows that since its *omniscient*³ author is **God** (2 Tim. 3:16), Scripture is accurate. Since God also declares Himself the creator of the universe (Gen. 1:1) we can hold that God is infinitely better-informed about our cosmic-beginning than are *scientists*. So the **Bible merits our trust as the final authority on matters of creation**. **NONETHELESS**, on this very foundation, **unsettling** as it may seem, it is **NOT to Genesis that the Bible directs people, in order to potentially become persuaded witnesses of God's compelling creative powers**. Stay tuned then for the **Bible's chosen means** to that end.

A recent Gallup survey⁴ says **40% of Americans are YECs**. They hold that the *creation* days of *Genesis* were 24-hours each, the "*two great lights*" were made on the 4th Day, and that creation was "*finished*" less than 10,000 years ago. They also claim that Noah's flood formed our globe's every *surface feature* except for recent volcanics. Yet in reality the minimal requirements of **just** fossil-formation **alone**, renders that view impossible.⁵ By **contrast** those of us who embrace the *Big Bang (BB)* creation of the cosmos some 13.75 billion years ago, declare that that momentous event stands as **the most unassailable⁶ scientific proof⁷ ever**, for God's existence. The reason is that the events entailed in Genesis 1:1 fully reconcile with the entire array of **scientific⁸ facts⁹**.

Nevertheless, American Christianity is **accelerating in declining numbers**. A separate *Gallup* poll notes that while two decades ago, **42 %** of adults worshiped regularly, by contrast **today** only "**30%**" do.¹⁰ *Pew Research* says, "**Nones**" [*atheists, agnostics, apathetics*] **now comprise the largest cohort in America**" (**28%**), having nearly **doubled** from 2007 to surpassing Catholics (**23%**) ... and Evangelicals (**24%**) today.¹¹ In seeking to reverse this trend, JW Montgomery urges Christians to both **expose society's rampant ignorance** and **substantiate as factual the historical claims** that demonstrate Jesus Christ (**JC**) was raised from the dead **as indeed the Bible portrays Him**:

*"[Christ's resurrection] is a **factual claim...that can be supported by the very approach[es] we...use every day to distinguish truth from fantasy**. [Often] the 21st Century Christian community [**refuses**] to present ... the Gospel as a matter of [**evidence-based**] **truth**. And I firmly believe that this reductionism of reducing [it] as **non-factual...subjective, and emotional, is one of the most important reasons for the decline of the ... Christianization of our modern societies**."*¹² (boldface mine)

Indeed **both the scientific case for the BB and the historical facts that affirm JC, fully discredit YEC methods**. Because YEC **picks just the "fruit" they seek**, it **obfuscates the truth**

¹ The term "science" was coined by William Whewell in 1834. Prior to that scientists were called "natural philosophers."

² I deem the three words, Bible, revelation (of God), and Scripture to be synonyms.

³ The word means "knowing literally everything."

⁴ <https://www.livescience.com/46123-many-americans-creationists.html>

⁵ See my paper, "Could God 'Do' A *Global* Noahic Flood?," at my website: www.christianityontheoffense.com/articles (final page).

⁶ Although dissenters seek to discredit the BB by favoring a **multiverse** instead, no empirical evidence can be found that validates it.

⁷ E.g. "Proof beyond a reasonable doubt." ** See also my paper, "The Scientific Impossibility of a Universe Creating Itself." Op.cit. (5).

⁸ The term "empirical" refers to data that can be perceived by the senses (seen, touched, etc.) and can be subjected to testing.

⁹ See my paper, "God's Prints are Everywhere," Op.cit. (4). ** See also Hugh Ross. *The Creator and the Cosmos*. 3rd ed. (RTB, 2019).

¹⁰ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/642548/church-attendance-declined-religious-groups.aspx> (boldface mine).

¹¹ <https://www.npr.org/2024/01/24/1226371734/religious-nones-are-now-the-largest-single-group-in-the-u-s> (boldface mine).

¹² John Warwick Montgomery. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EttrRUyTQIs> (6:37f). Also see his, *Faith Founded on Fact*. (NRP, 1517).

that **biblical claims thrive from being evaluated by factual scrutiny.**¹³ One fortunate aspect of the disparity of intervals between these views (six 24-hour-days vs. billions of years) is that they high-light the distinction in methods each employs for reckoning the age of creation. Although YEC calls its method “*scientific creationism*,” it utterly ignores the modifier.” For example, their means of “learning” our planet’s geological history entails fixating on **Genesis 1** as their heresy-filter; they proceed to **discard** every physical detail that conflicts with YEC’s construal of the *text*.¹⁴ By stark contrast, **actual science directly analyzes nature’s details** by investigating them with the senses God gave us! Note, there is nothing about this distinction that denigrates biblical revelation. At the same time however, nothing in Scripture urges readers to deny the reports of our senses.¹⁵ It is for this reason that I seek to liberate *scientific* inquiry from interference by YEC which, by contrast, **ignores** Psalm 19:1 by treating the study of nature as though it is **God’s “Do-Not-Enter” zone!**

Now some may fear I’m *handing the henhouse over to the fox*. But quite to the contrary I refuse to **denigrate** God’s Word in any way. I am merely asking, “*Can we trust details in nature to convey truth on its own?*”¹⁶ Or does the Bible really usurp that privilege?” Then I ask further, “*Is it not reasonable to expect YECs to affirm the first question while denying the latter IF the context is not creation? If so, why do the rules shift if the context becomes creation?*” **Despite** common misconceptions, **science too has its own innate limitations** that cannot be ignored (e.g. science has no capacity to pronounce spiritual concepts as nonexistent, and **scientists share the same obligation as laypeople to provide supporting empirical**¹⁷ **reasons for their views**). I don’t write this out of malice. My conflict with YEC does not charge it with chronic failure to appreciate certain specific data but instead with willfully bypassing every aspect of the scientific method (above paragraph, “*actual science...*”). The **harmful consequence** of the **YEC posture (p. 1 above, par. 3)** is the **false impression** that the Gospel of Christ rests on **wishful thinking** as opposed to **factual truth**.

Having shored up the status of science to its rightful role of studying *physical* reality, I now bring us home by **declaring** that **science, of necessity**, plays **an essential role in contending for our Christian claims**. This includes Peter’s charge to “*give a reason for [our] hope*” (1 Peter 3:15).¹⁸ Biblical revelation extends both **from the heavenly realm** (the intentions God wills to convey to us) and **into the earthly realm** which entails both the *historical* occasions and *geographic* settings where God intervenes by His miraculous deeds. As for the *first* realm I repeat, *scientific* inquiry **has no access** (comparable to the impossibility of *scientifically* learning what is on the *mind* of a person who refuses to talk).¹⁹ On the other hand, since **earthly** events by definition do occur within the same arena that **is the proper domain of scientific** events, **earthly** miracles become detectable in ways that scientists *can* referee. For example, despite the likelihood that skeptics will deny *miracles*, they can nevertheless judge whether or not it is true that a crucified victim was **reported by crowds of witnesses** to have subsequently appeared **alive in public**—1 Corinthians 15:6).

¹³ Legal scholar Dr. Montgomery argues that legal goals (“proof beyond a reasonable doubt”) better resolve intractable problems than do abstract debates. J. W. Montgomery. *History, Law, and Christianity*. (Canadian Inst. for Law, Theology, and Public Policy, 2002), p. 69f.

¹⁴ The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (**LCMS**) believes this. E.g. Where science and biblical revelation overlap “*Christian theology asserts that Scripture, not science, has the final authority.*” In *Christ All Things Hold together: The Intersection of Science & Christian Theology*. (The CTCR, 2015), p. 24. ** My paper, “*Genesis 1:1 Easily Reconciles with Big Bang Cosmology*,” refutes the LCMS. Op.cit. (5).

¹⁵ The barrage of invisible warrior angels in 2 Kings 6:15 doesn’t refute this claim for the reason that they weren’t a *natural* occurrence.

¹⁶ *Luther’s Works: Genesis*, v. 1 (Concordia, 1958), p. 47. Martin Luther, perhaps surprisingly, wrote, “*The astronomers are the experts [on the sun and moon] from whom it is most convenient to get what may be discussed about these subjects*” apart from Scripture.

¹⁷ Evidence qualifies as “empirical” when it can be apprehended by one or more of our five senses.

¹⁸ While the *standard* goal of science is the study of things *physical*, in spirit, its criteria can also apply to rigorous *historical* analysis.

¹⁹ Such is also the case in certain brain surgical operations where the patients remain conscious to report their psychological state.

The Bible is the only known sacred religious text in all known history that makes the claim that a God who wholly transcends His creation, has intervened into the physical arena by various means including **1)** creating and sustaining the universe, **2)** addressing certain people—Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, etc., **3)** employing certain individuals as mouth-pieces—*Prophets* in the Old Testament (**OT**) and *Apostles* in the New Testament, **4)** bringing about major saving events (the Exodus in the OT and the incarnation of Jesus, including his resurrection following his death on the cross, and the multitude of miracles that Jesus performed on certain occasions, to name a few. The point of this section is that, for the reason that these touchstones into science, geography and history render *biblical* claims potentially subject to *evaluation* against the background details of given circumstances. For example, historians at an archaeological dig might either seek a deeper grasp the cultural aspects indicated by specifics of the ancient artifacts that are unveiled or instead seek an answer to questions of compatibility with a given biblical passage, to name a few options.

Yet the fruit of such scrutiny yields **more** than the bolstering of claims. It is vital for people to accept that **polemical contentions** are **the ONLY POSSIBLE means to verify biblical claims**. So it is high-time I lay before you **that Bible passage I have withheld since my first paragraph!** It is found at the start of the *body* of St. Paul's extended *proclamation* of the Gospel of Christ in his noted *Letter to the Romans*. While the *good-news* aspect of his treatise appears in the 2nd half of ch. 3, the treatise itself begins at ch. 1:18 where Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (**HS**), highlights both the **convicting law** of God and also the **ramifications** that logically follow from it:

18 "The wrath of God has been revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of those who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth**.
19 For what can be known about God is **plain to them because God has shown it to them**. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been **clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made**. So they are **without excuse**" (Romans 1:18-20 – boldface, mine).

As we delve into this passage I urge you firstly to include all three verses in their **entirety** for the reason that omitting either v.19 or 20 neglects aspects necessary to complete the HS's point. For by starting (correctly) with v.18, the expression, "*wrath of God*" clarifies the core moral problem as a matter of **suppressing truth** in general (which in itself God decries), while adding v.19 further hones the offense as **ignoring God's revelation** in particular. Yet only with v.20 is it clarified that the specific aspect of the revelation that is being ignored is the **very testimony from nature itself**. I highlight the above for the reason that **YECs habitually omit them** as perhaps a way to evade the gravity that Scripture assigns to nature as its vehicle to affirm God's power as Creator. Notice further that while *English* translations of v.20 use "*world*;" the Greek text uses "*kosmos*." Interestingly, the latter term includes the entire universe (Genesis 1:1)! This tacit equivalence exhibits how the HS craftily uses a term that viably fits both Bible-times and our vastly-different *present age*!

Several additional aspects from this passage also call for our attention. Notice that St. Paul charges that denying God's existence in the face of the truth of nature, renders skeptics to **have no excuse**. I am not hereby raising the question of agreement with Paul on this matter (I said on p.1 that I **do**.)! I wish instead to highlight **the weight God places on the veracity of nature** to speak truth about His "*eternal power and divine nature*." So, it is clearly true that God deems the naked witness of nature as a "pulpit" to declare God's existence. How tragic then that YEC, perhaps inadvertently, **frustrates God's will** to announce His power and deity through nature.

Finally, Romans 1:18-20 does **NOT stand** monumentally **alone** *against* the tide of the rest of Holy Scripture. To the contrary, God's goal to allow rationality of all kinds ((1) the phenomena of the natural order in Rom 1:18f, (2) logic and reason such as in Isaiah 44:9f by rebuking the absurdity of idolatry, (3) the occurrences of monumental miracles by God manifested as especially during both the Exodus in the Old Testament and Jesus' public ministry in the New Testament) be employed to the end that people are brought to attention by events that cannot be explained away for the very reason that they confront our senses apart from the naked Word of God. Let not my assertion offend you. God who is the author of reason understands better than we that, as the First Law of Rationality, the *Law of Non-Contradiction*, states, "*It is impossible to hold (suppose) the same thing to be and not to be at the same time.*"²⁰ Stated differently, no assertion can be both true and not true at the same time under the same set of circumstances. YEC defies this principle by appealing to Scripture to describe phenomenal events as opposed to investigating these specifics directly.

Tragically, I say, forty percent of American Christians are called "Young-Earth Creationists." YECs are sure to disparage this paper on *religious* grounds.²¹ There are two aspects of their beliefs that are highly relevant for readers to understand. Firstly, since they hold the Bible to be the revealed word of God (as I too do as a Christian) it seems reasonable to deem the Bible as the final authority as to the history of His creative work. I reply that although their initial syllogism is valid in both aspects, the conclusion that the interpretive policy reaches fails to anticipate or consider one fundamental viable alternative. Regarding the question of the final interpretational authority on creation, God's Word in its most explicit statement on the matter, says firstly that nature in-and-of-itself is trustworthy testimony to God's existence so that secondly all people are accountable to the facts of nature for their decision to believe or disbelieve in the Maker of the heavens and the earth.

Every paper of mine cited below is accessible from my website, Op.cit. (5).

All are relevant to challenging "Young Earth Creationism"

"The Biblical Demand to Take Another Look at Genesis One: Ten Exegetical Indicators that Challenge the View that the Days of Genesis One are Literal 24-Hour Periods"

"In Christ All Things Hold Together."

"Damaging Ramifications Far Broader than the Age of the Earth."

"Disarming the Perceived Conflict Between Science and Religion."

"The Elephant Standing Between Secularists and their Receptivity to the Gospel."

"Genesis 1:1 Easily Accommodates Big Bang Cosmology."

"Ham Must Not Be Swallowed Whole."

"'Genesis: Paradise Lost,' Movie Errors."

"Romans 1:18-23: A Study"

"Should Young-Earth Creationists and Old Earth Creationists Call a Truce?"

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²⁰ Renford Bambrough. *The Philosophy of Aristotle*. bk. IV, no. 4 (Mentor, 1963), p.58.

²¹ <https://www.livescience.com/46123-many-americans-creationists.html>