



OASIS ASKS:

How do the fossil
record and the Bible
work together?

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Dear Noah, we could have sworn you said the ark wasn't leaving till 5.
~Sincerely, The Unicorns

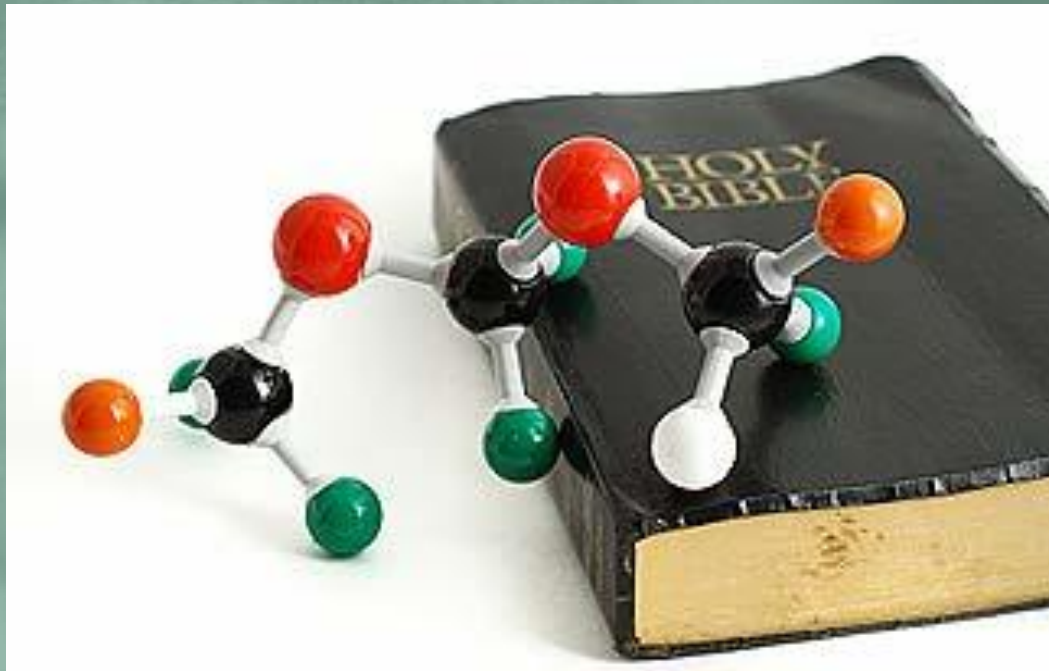
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Your question....

- How do we reconcile the fossil record with the Biblical account of creation? How do science and the Bible consociate?



Science and the Bible

- **Science – measuring the measurable**
 - Experimentation and observation of the material world and how it works
 - Can't define the metaphysical
- **The Bible**
 - A theological history, not a scientific textbook
 - “The Bible exists not to tell us as much how the Heavens go, but rather tells us how to go to Heaven”
 - Galileo

God the Creator

The first verse in the Bible, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth” (Gen 1:1) tells us that the Bible is about God.

What does creation reveal to us about God?

God and Creation

1. There is one, infinite God
2. God is Trinitarian
3. God is eternally uncaused
4. God is alive



God and Creation

5. God is independent and creation is dependent on Him
6. God is transcendent and separate from creation
7. God is immanent

God and Creation

8. God is personal
9. God is powerful, creating everything out of nothing
10. God is beautiful
11. God is holy, without evil



God and Creation

12. God is a prophet

13. God is gracious

14. God is sovereign



For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 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.

Rom 1:19-20 ESV

Science and the Bible

“For the scientist who has lived by faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak. As he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”

– Astronomer Robert Jastrow

Flexibility of the Hebrew Language

- **Literary Structure of Genesis 1 -2**
 - Poetic format
 - Content of the Genesis creation account may be taken “literally” or may be taken “metaphorically”

Poetry

?

Flexibility of the Hebrew Language

- In the *beginning*...(Gen. 1:1)
 - re'shit (pronounced ray-sheeth) (Hb.): A starting point
 - Does not connote any specific length of time or necessitate that the next thing immediately follows
 - What God created in Genesis 1:1 could have existed for a moment or billions of years before Genesis 1:2



Flexibility of the Hebrew Language

- And the earth *was* without form and void...(Gen. 1:2)
 - hayah (Hb.): “to be” or “to become”
 - The word allows for that state of the earth being without form and void, or the earth becoming that way after a period of time or an event



Flexibility of the Hebrew Language

- ...and there was evening and there was morning, the first *day* (Gen. 1:5)
 - yom (Hb.): daylight, or 24 hours, or a period of time
 - The word allows for a six literal twenty-four hour periods of time or for any period of time (such as billions of years)



2 General Christian “Fossil Positions”



- **Young Earth**
 - Fossil record dating by scientific methods is faulty
 - Humanity is 6000-12,000 years old (4004 BC - ~10,000 BC)
- **Old Earth**
 - Fossil record dating by scientific methods is accurate
 - Humanity dates back to at least 10,000 BC

General Christian “Fossil Positions”

“There is no demonstrated contradiction of fact between Genesis 1 and science. There is only a conflict of interpretation. Either *most* modern scientists are wrong in insisting the world is billions of years old, or else *some* Bible interpreters are wrong in insisting on only 144 hours of creation some several thousand years before Christ...But, in either case it is not a question of *inspiration* of Scripture, but of the *interpretation* of Scripture (and of the scientific data).”

-Norman Geisler, *Big Book of Bible Difficulties*

View 1: Young Earth Creationism

- **Genesis 1-2 are literal accounts**
 - Entire universe created in six literal 24 hour days
 - Young earth (6000-12,000 yrs old)



View 1: Young Earth Creationism

- **Strengths**

- Seeks to be faithful to a strict interpretation of Scripture
- Refuses to compromise on God's involvement in creation

- **Weaknesses**

- Some biblical difficulties such as “light” & “evening and morning” on days 1-3 before the sun and moon's creation on day 4.
- Must explain away mounting scientific evidence of an “old earth” and the fossil record with the scientifically strained “flood theory” and (or) “aged theory”
- God appears deceitful in the “aged theory”
- Accepts scientific dating when it backs up archeological finds that support the Bible but discounts the same methods when dating techniques go beyond ~10,000 BC

View 2: Historic Creationism

- ***Beginning* in Genesis 1:1 is an undefined time and the creation days are literal days**
 - Old earth is likely (~4.5 billion years)
 - The six days in Genesis 1 are literal 24 hour days that occur to prepare the earth for humanity's creation



View 2: Historic Creationism

- **Strengths**

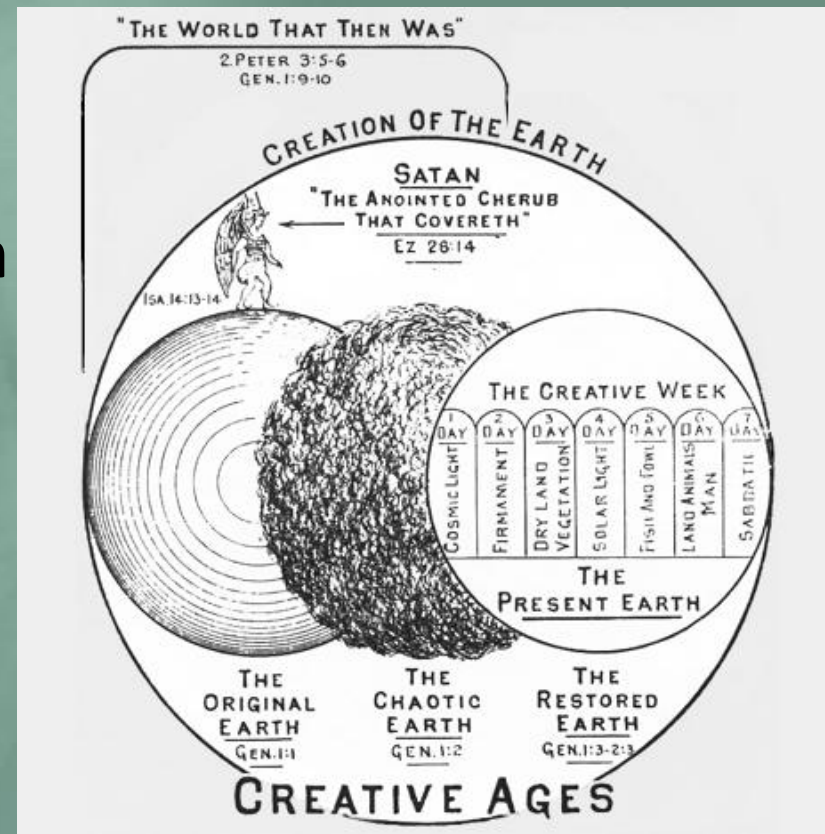
- Faithful to a literal view of the six days of creation
- Acceptable of the scientific data regarding the age of the universe, the earth, and the fossil record

- **Weakness**

- Support for the “historic” view of the word *beginning* in Genesis 1:1 may a stretch of the text

View 3: Gap Theory

- A gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 based on the possible translation of “the earth *became* without form...”
 - In the gap there was chaos due to divine judgment from a catastrophic event like the fall of Satan
 - The six days in Genesis 1 are literal 24 hour days of God’s restoring and creating work



View 3: Gap Theory

- **Strengths**

- Faithful to a more literal creation account
- Acceptable of the scientific data regarding the age of the universe, the earth, and the fossil record

- **Weakness**

- Hard pressed to find any solid biblical support for a “second” creation after Genesis 1:2
- Support for the “gap” view of the word *became* in Genesis 1:2 may a stretch of the text

View 4: Literary Framework View

- **Genesis 1 and 2 are a figurative and topical framework, not a literal sequential order**
 - **The six days in Genesis 1 are metaphorical**

Day 1: Light & Dark Separated	Day 4: Sun, moon, stars (light) created
Day 2: Sky & water separated	Day 5: fish & birds created
Day 3: Land and water separated; plants & trees created	Day 6: Animals and man created

View 4: Literary Framework View

- **Strengths**

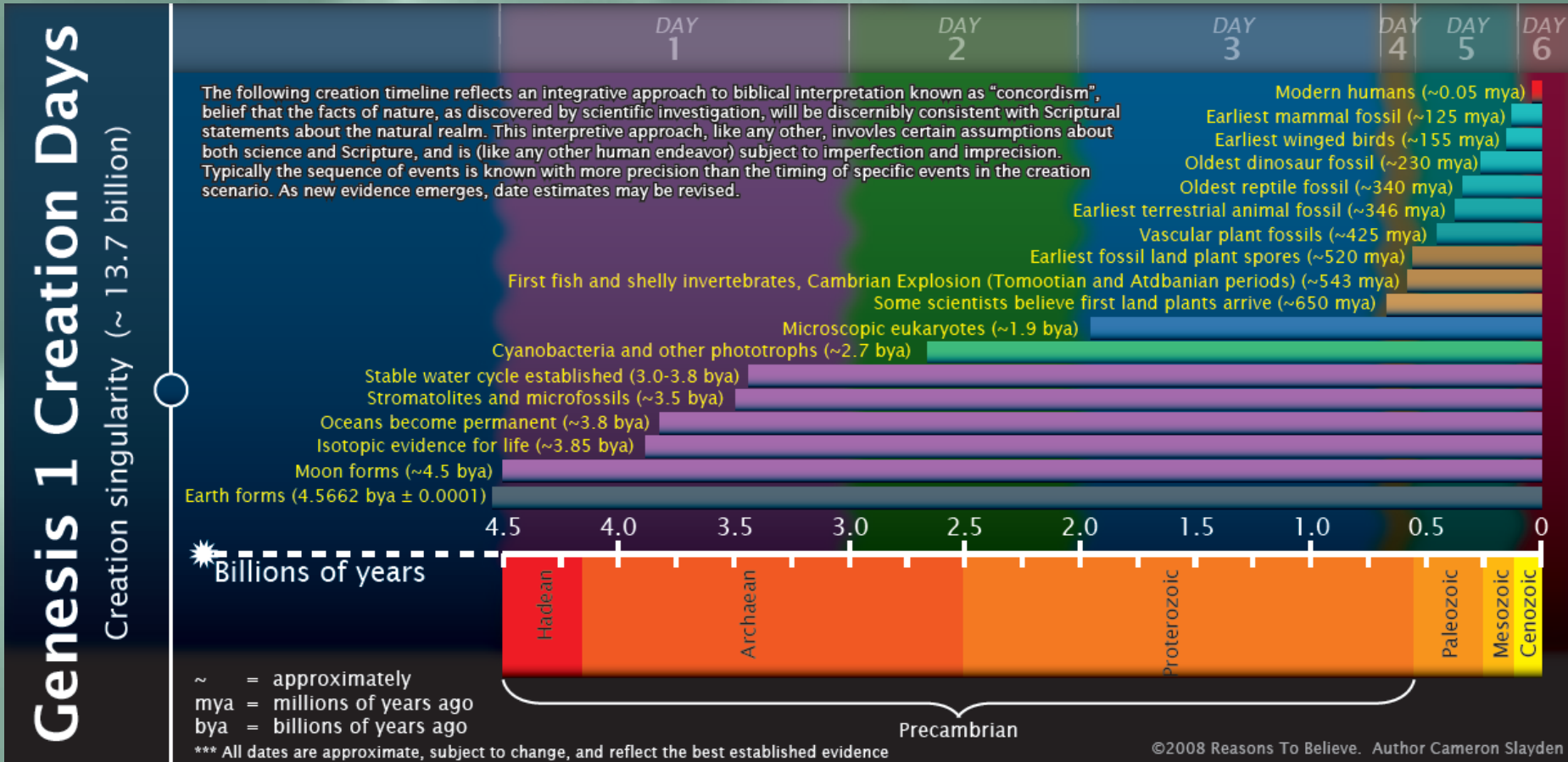
- Appreciates the poetic structure of Genesis 1 & 2
- Acceptable of the scientific data regarding the age of the universe, the earth, and the fossil record

- **Weakness**

- Day 7 breaking of the parallel nature of the framework could be considered problematic
- Poetic language in the Bible is still used to show a literal truth, so caution is needed in how far to take the emphasis on the figurative framework

View 5: Day-Age View

- *Day* is viewed as a general period of time. Creation is seen as a set of six sequential ages.
 - The six days in Genesis 1 are metaphorical



View 5: Day-Age View

- **Strengths**

- Appreciates the poetic structure of Genesis 1 & 2
- Acceptable of the scientific data regarding the age of the universe, the earth, and the fossil record

- **Weakness**

- Chronological struggles with general science view of creation (e.g. the sun being created on day 4)
- Poetic language in the Bible is still used to show a literal truth, so caution is needed in how far to take the emphasis on the figurative framework

View 6: Theistic Evolution

- God started the creation process as well as the mechanism of evolution as the *how* creation process. God was directly involved in forming the human spirit in day 6.
 - The six days in Genesis 1 are metaphorical



View 6: Theistic Evolution

- **Strengths**
 - Appreciates the poetic structure of Genesis 1 & 2
 - Acceptance of the scientific data regarding the age of the universe, the earth, and the fossil record
- **Weakness**
 - Has the struggles of macro-evolutionary theories
 - Can become deistic by overemphasizing the transcendence of God at the expense of His immanence
 - Can sacrifice the historic Adam and Eve account

Christian Fossil & Creation Positions

“Our interpretations of Genesis 1 have enough uncertainty that either [young earth or old earth] position is possible. Both sides need to grow in knowledge of the truth, even if this means abandoning a long-held position.”

-Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

WARNING!

- The fact that God (who is infinite & uncreated) created the universe is an *essential* truth to which Christians must hold
- The methods of “how” God created the universe is a *nonessential* area that Christians can disagree upon based on the flexibility of Scripture.
- Christians need to live Christ by not making essentials into nonessentials or nonessentials into essentials

- **Creation theories should not be used to divide the church or attack/slander other Christians**
- **If your conversation about creation accounts with other Christians does not lead to glorifying God and a deeper relationship with Christ: Drop it!**



Faith Applications

- Knowing the various creation theories is a great apologetics tools to help preach the gospel
- The Christian's study of creation (and its theories) should bring the Christian to a glorifying of God as the Creator and a remembrance of the relationship that God seeks with us through Jesus Christ



Some Resources

- “Introduction to Genesis” in the *ESV Study Bible*
- “Creation” chapter in *Doctrine* by Mark Driscoll
- “Creation” chapter in *Christian Theology* by Millard Erickson
- “Creation” chapter in *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem
- *The Language of God* by Francis Collins
- Parts III & IV in *What’s So Great About Christianity* by Dinesh D’Souza
- Biologos.org
- Reasons.org
- “Recommended Reading: Creation, Evolution, and Science”
<http://theresurgence.com/2009/06/17/recommended-reading-creation-evolution-and-science>