

The Credibility of the Creation Account, or, A Defense of a Literal Interpretation of the Early Chapters of Genesis

Throughout the ages, Satan has always worked overtime to undermine God, His Word, and His Work. One of the main areas in which Satan is waging an alarmingly successful assault is in the area of Origins. Many, intelligent, sincere church-goers and even Christians have been lured into doubting the credibility of the Creation account as recorded in Genesis. Their reasons for rejecting a literal Genesis are questionable at best. Even though they may be sincere in their efforts to reconcile Scripture with “scientific evolution”, they certainly are sincerely wrong. It is vital to the very root of Christian theology and Christian living to take Genesis literally. Believe it or not, real science does not in any way disprove a literal Genesis. As churches, we would do well to examine our stand on this issue if we want to remain healthy and be vibrant witnesses to the veracity of Scripture and of God’s grace in our lives.

I. Some Alternate Views of Genesis

Hugh Ross is a powerful example of a sincere person unwittingly swallowing the cyanide of doubting the literalness of the Genesis account. Ross is a professional astronomer who currently directs the efforts of the organization, Reasons to Believe. Ross is well known for his weekly television broadcast on TBN, and for his lectures, seminars and courses on Christian apologetics.¹

A big part of Ross’ ministry is to try to convince Christians that we should not take the unscientific view that the earth is only a few thousand years old. He reasons that taking this view will not only turn away unbelievers, but it is tantamount to tossing reason out the door. He says, for example, that modern discoveries, including the Big Bang theory, prove that there is a God similar to the One of the Scriptures.² He equates the Big Bang theory and billions of years with God’s general revelation.³ He strongly advocates the notions that the earth is billions of years old, that the creation days of Genesis were long periods of time, and that Noah’s flood was not global. Because of these views, he finds it necessary to also propose that creation has been

¹ Ross, H., *Creation and Time*, Navpress, Colorado Springs, 1994.

² Ref. 1, p. 126-133.

³ Ross puts general revelation on equal footing with special revelation (the Bible) when he says that ‘*the facts of nature may be likened to a sixty-seventh book of the Bible.*’ Ref. 1, p. 56.

subject to its bondage of decay, including animal bloodshed, long before Adam and Eve came on the scene.⁴

Does Hugh Ross operate in a corner? Hardly. Here are some big names and their endorsements of one of Ross' books, *Creation and Time*. Dallas Willard, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California wrote: *'The cutting edge of Christian evangelism today is blunted, the bond of love between many Christian leaders severely weakened, and the peace of mind of thoughtful individuals is destroyed by what seems to be a contradiction of faith and science over the age of the physical universe. . . . In a spirit of peace, and with complete mastery of the relevant biblical, historical and scientific data, Hugh Ross effectively deals with all points of tension in this painful situation.'*⁵ Norman L. Geisler, Dean of Southern Evangelical Seminary, contributing writer to the Christian Research Journal, wrote: *'Creation and Time is the best book on this topic in print. It is a must for anyone interested in the conflict between science and Scripture. Dr. Ross's plea to overzealous "young earthers" not to make the age of the earth a test of orthodoxy is long overdue.'*⁶

Others who endorse Hugh Ross' approach to Genesis include James Dobson, Ravi Zacharius, Don Richardson (author of *Peace Child*), Dr. Wolters from Redeemer College, William Lane Craig, Lee Strobel, Charles Colson, and so on. As you can see, there are many within the evangelical community who do not take Genesis literally.

There is also a small group of conservative Christians, found mainly within Reformed circles, who are committed to the authority of Scripture, but who are impressed with modern science's idea of the vast age of the earth.⁷ They therefore interpret the biblical text in such a way as to unite the authority of Scripture with billions of years of earth history. One way they do this is to concede that Genesis chapters 1-11 are stories that exist for ideas only, and not for history.⁸ For example, the six days of creation in Genesis one do not provide any sort of

⁴ Ref. 1, p. 64-65.

⁵ Ref. 1, p. 1. Van Bebbler and Taylor have done a thorough critique of this book (Eden Productions, 1995).

⁶ Ref. 1, back cover

⁷ Billions of years of earth history implies that there was no global flood: see Ref. 65. Some reasons why these conservatives believe this are: too high a view of evolutionary science, too much of what I call "confessional exclusivism" (the idea that only what is found in the confessions is of primary importance), a misunderstanding of the historical setting of the confessions (discussed later), and too low a view of the perspicuity and authority of Scripture.

⁸ Jordon, James, *Creation in Six Days*, Canon Press, Moscow, Idaho, p. 19, 1999.

chronology, but instead a literary “framework” that describes the creative process for our limited minds.⁹ This method of interpreting Genesis is called the Framework Hypothesis.

The basic assumption is that since there is such a supreme literary quality of the Genesis text, the text cannot be speaking of actual history. First hypothesized by liberal German theologians in the 19th century, this Framework Interpretation was further developed by Professor Arie Noordzij of the University of Utrecht in 1924.¹⁰ It has been more recently propagated by men such as Bruce K. Waltke (who moved from Dallas Theological Seminary to Westminster Theological Seminary and later went on to Regent College),¹¹ and Meredith Kline (who teaches at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Westminster Theological Seminary). For example, in his Commentary on Genesis Kline states:

*‘The prologue’s literary character [i.e. Genesis 1:1-2:3], however, limits its use for constructing scientific models, for its language is that of simple observation, and a poetic quality, reflected in the strophic structure, permeates its style. Exegesis indicates that the scheme of the creation week itself is a poetic figure and that the several pictures of creation history are set within the six work-day frames not chronologically but topically . . .’*¹²

Well, what about this Framework method of interpreting Genesis? One basic problem is its unscriptural method of interpreting the Bible, in which a dualism is placed between literary form and literal meaning.¹³ In other words, a passage of Scripture cannot be literal and literary. This assumption is not found in Scripture.¹⁴

Another problem is that the Framework interpretation must hold that the *events* mentioned in Genesis 1 never happened. Genesis 1:9 says that God gathered all the waters from the earth

⁹ MacArthur, John, *The Battle for the Beginning*, W. Publishing Group, USA, p. 20, 2001.

¹⁰ Kelly, Douglas, *Creation and Change*, Christian Focus Publications, Ross-Shire, Great Britain, p. 113, 1997. Kelly is Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina. In pages 112 to 134 of this book Kelly gives a scholarly critique of the Framework Hypothesis. For an excellent, easy to read critique, see Ref. 9, p. 20-29. For a complete critique, see Ref. 8, the entire book.

¹¹ Ref. 8, p. 29.

¹² Kline, Meredith, ‘Commentary on Genesis’, *The New Bible Commentary Revised*, Edited by D. Guthrie *et al.*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, p. 81-82, 1971, as quoted in Ref. 10, p. 113.

¹³ Ref. 10, p. 115.

¹⁴ Elegant literary form is found elsewhere in Scripture. Surely, for example, the strophic or hymnic structure of Philippians 2:5-11 does not negate the reality of Christ’s humiliation and exaltation.

into one place and the dry land appeared.¹⁵ The Framework interpretation says that as an event, this never happened.¹⁶ Perhaps it happened as a long process but not as an event.¹⁷ All we can learn from Genesis one is the *idea* that God created and ordered the universe over an unknown length of time and through an unknown process. James Jordan gives an interesting analogy to illustrate where this kind of interpretation logically leads to:

'This is a very interesting way to read the Bible! Let's apply it to John 20. John 20 says that Jesus' body was not physically in the tomb on resurrection morning and that He physically rose from the grave. But we "know" from modern science that dead people don't rise! Maybe John 20 doesn't really have to be taken with "wooden literalism." Notice, for instance, in verse 12 that two angels sat in the tomb, one at one end of the slab and one at the other. What this means is that the death of Jesus is the "mercy seat" where God meets with men, for in the Tabernacle two cherubim stood on either end of the "mercy seat." Now that we have the idea from this verse, we no longer have to believe that it ever really happened, at least according to the interpretative methods of the Frameworkers.

Or consider John 20:15. Mary Magdalene saw Jesus and thought He was the gardener, for the tomb was in a garden. Well, here is the new Eve, restored from her sins, encountering the New Adam in the new garden of the new covenant. That's the idea. But did she really see and touch the physical body of Jesus? Who knows? and who cares? asks our hypothetical Frameworker. The point of the resurrection narratives is not to tell us about historical events but to make us understand God's word to us, which perhaps is: "Don't worry; be happy!"¹⁸

I trust no Reformed/Evangelical Frameworker would go this far. In fact, I'm sure they would agree that the theology in these texts is based on the historical reality of the events. However the first chapters of Genesis also make claims about historical events. Since the Bible

¹⁵ Ref. 8, p. 85.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ref. 8, p. 86.

is God's inerrant Word, what it claims happened really happened, whether it is the events of creation week or the events of resurrection morning.

II. Reasons Why People Reject a Literal Genesis

Why are these men, who seem to have a genuine love for the Bible, afraid of taking Genesis literally? I believe it is to make room for pagan-based¹⁹ ideas of science, which they assume are modern discoveries.²⁰ People often refer to the dispute between Galileo and the Church of his day. The argument goes as follows: "In the 17th century, Galileo, representing the scientific community, showed evidence that heavenly bodies did not orbit around the earth, but on the contrary, the planets, including the earth, revolved around the sun. The church ousted Galileo on the grounds that he was teaching something that contradicted the Bible. However, this was an embarrassment to the church, since Galileo was proven to be correct. So, the church today must not make the same blunder as the church in Galileo's day. There is so much evidence that all animals and plants have developed from a common ancestor, and it is an established scientific fact that the earth is nearly five billion years old. Therefore, we need to take a second look at the early chapters of Genesis, interpreting them in light of these scientific facts."

However, this is a wrong interpretation of history.²¹ The Galileo episode was certainly not simply a case of science versus the Church. The heliocentric (sun-centred) system, although proposed by Copernicus in the 16th century, was opposed by the majority of the scientific community: they were following the teachings of Aristotle and Ptolemy. Conversely, the church was initially open to Galileo's discoveries.²² Nevertheless, many church leaders took the side of the scientific majority opinion, and tried to find scriptural support by employing some dubious hermeneutics. They claimed, for example, that since Moses wrote about a risen sun²³ and a sunset,²⁴ this meant that the sun (and other heavenly bodies) travelled around the earth. It was these church leaders, who trying to apply their understanding of science to the Bible, that were the ones who opposed Galileo.

¹⁹ Morris, Henry, *The Long War Against God*, Baker Book House, Michigan, p. 197-260, 1989.

²⁰ For example, see Ref. 10, p. 119.

²¹ Grigg, Russel, "The Galileo Twist," *Creation*, 19(4):30-32, September-November 1997.

²² Sarfati, Jonathan, *Refuting Evolution*, Master Books, Green Forest, p. 99-100.

²³ Genesis 19:23

²⁴ Genesis 28:4

Is there a lesson we can learn from the Galileo incident? Yes there is.²⁵ Today, the scientific establishment holds tenaciously to naturalism²⁶ and long ages. It is taken as fact that the universe originated billions of years ago by a big bang. Evolution from a common ancestor is not questioned. Many church leaders have gone along with these ideas.

Yet, there is today an abundance of scientific evidence that contradicts these claims. The Bible is clear that the earth is certainly less than ten thousand years old²⁷ and that God created organisms fully complete, in specific categories²⁸. However, people who believe this are ridiculed. They are told, based on dubious hermeneutics, that the early chapters of Genesis actually support the idea of billions of years of God-directed evolution. I believe it is the compromising Theistic Evolutionists, the Progressive Creationists, the Frameworkers, and so on, who did not learn the lesson from the Galileo controversy.

The following statement by Dr. Pattle P. T. Pun, professor of biology at Wheaton College, explains why many in the church today do not take all of Genesis as literal:

*'It is apparent that the most straightforward understanding of the Genesis record, without regard to all the hermeneutical considerations suggested by science is that God created heaven and earth in six solar days. . . . However, the recent creationist position . . . has denied and belittled the vast amount of scientific evidence amassed to support the theory of natural selection and the antiquity of the earth.'*²⁹

²⁵ Ref. 21.

²⁶ The belief that everything can be explained by natural causes.

²⁷ I believe, along with John MacArthur and others, that the earth is about 6000 years old. This is based on a straightforward reading of the biblical chronology. Many conservative Christians, believe that although the earth is not millions of years old, it is definitely several thousand years older than 6000. This is based on extra biblical evidence which is taken as having precedence over biblical data. I am aware of the possibility of a very few places in the biblical genealogies where an argument could be made for gaps in the record. However, it would be highly incredible to suggest that these could be stretched to thousands of years. For an excellent study in this area, see Beechick's article Chronology for Everybody (*TJ*, 15(3), 2001, p. 67-73). The thesis is that a chronology taken strictly from the Bible, results in a 6000-year-old view of the earth. We all need to believe all of the Bible, including the details of the chronology, regardless of seeming contradictory evidence from archaeology and secular chronologies. I believe that placing the biblical chronologies on equal footing with secular chronologies is an attack on the veracity of the Scriptures!

²⁸ "After their own kind"

²⁹ *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, March 1987, p. 14, as quoted in Ref. 65, p. 82.

Clearly, the issue is not one of understanding what Genesis means, but whether we are willing to twist the text to fit so called “facts” of science, which are really not facts, but misinterpretations of scientific data based on evolutionary assumptions.

III. Importance of Taking Genesis Literally

Can we know from Scripture that Genesis is definitely to be taken at face value? Yes we can. Allow me to give very condensed explanation.³⁰

A. Let's first examine the creation days.

In the Old Testament, whenever the Hebrew word for day, “yom”, is modified by an ordinal (first day, second day, third day, and so on) and a numeral (six days), it always means a literal day. This is exactly what is found in Genesis one and Exodus 20:11.

On the fourth day, God created the sun, moon, and stars. Thus it is clear that the last three days of creation were defined by a period of darkness and a period of light from the sun, effected by the earth's rotation. Simply reading Genesis one shows you that there is no fundamental difference between the first three days and the last three days of creation.

The creation week is the basis for our seven-day week. God created for six days then rested on the seventh day. God *'blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it'*,³¹ and later identified this as the Sabbath day.³² More than once, God made it clear that the “six-days-of-rest-plus-the-Sabbath” pattern was because *'in six days the LORD made heaven and earth . . .'*³³

Clearly, Genesis one is written as literal history so we should take it as such.

B. Secondly, there is a serious theological problem with the idea that God created the world over millions of years.

³⁰ To study this deeper, here are some suggestions: Ref. 10, p. 107-110; Ref. 8, p. 171-209; Ref. 65; and Morris, John, *The Young Earth*, Master Books, Colorado Springs, p. 27-43, 1994.

³¹ Genesis 2:3

³² The Sabbath (meaning rest) day, identified by the Christian Church of the New Testament as the Lord's Day (Sunday) is still valid in the New Testament. This is because the Sabbath institution was based on a creation ordinance, although some ceremonial elements were present in the Old Testament, which are no longer valid today (Colossians 2:16). Jesus assumed the continuation of the Sabbath when He advised *'pray ye that your flight be not . . . on the Sabbath day'* (Matthew 24:21).

³³ Exodus 20:11; 31:15-17.

If there was death for millions of years before Adam sinned, than death did not come by sin.³⁴ What significance would all the Old Testament animal sacrifices have had, if animal death was part of the original good creation? However, we know that God's curse affected not only people, but all creation.³⁵ The Bible teaches that *'the wages of sin is death'* and that *'Christ died for us'*.³⁶ The doctrines of substitution and blood redemption are null if death and bloodshed ruled the planet for millions of years before there was any sin.

Surely an all-knowing God could devise a better method of creating the world than a random and inefficient process of evolution. Surely a loving God would not use the suffering, bloodshed and death of multitudes of animals all to arrive at man millions of years later!

C. The Bible clearly teaches a global flood.

This is so obvious from the Genesis account that I will leave that to your own reading. Nevertheless, many evangelicals will say that Noah's flood was merely a local flood somewhere in the Middle East.³⁷ However, deducing a local flood from the Genesis account defies all logic. If the Flood was local, why did Noah need to build an ark to escape it? Couldn't he just have walked to the other side of the nearby mountains? Why would God send animals on the ark? Wouldn't there be enough animals in the rest of the world who would not be drowned? Why would birds need to be on the ark? Couldn't they just fly away to dry land? If the Flood was local, how could the water rise to 15 cubits (probably about 8 metres) above the mountains (Genesis 7:20) without flooding the rest of the world? If the Flood was local, God would have broken His promise never to send such a flood again. Surely, the Genesis account demands a global flood.

D. Thirdly Jesus and the apostles took Genesis literally

³⁴ This is contrary to the tenor of Romans 5:12 and 1 Corinthians 15:21. Also, when God cursed man after the fall, He said, *'for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return'*, obviously implying that physical death resulted from Adam's original sin.

³⁵ Genesis 3:14,17,18; Romans 8:19-23

³⁶ Romans 6:23; 5:8

³⁷ It is common to see newspaper articles discussing Noah's flood, when in reality they are referring to evidence of some local flooding in the past, near the Black Sea or Mediterranean Basin. These articles invariably place a much older age for the flood than the biblical data suggests.

In Mark 10:6, Jesus said, *'But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.'* If the days of creation took billions of years, then God did not make man at the beginning, but nearer the end of earth history, contrary to what Jesus said.

In Luke 11:50, Jesus referred to *'the blood of the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world.'* Jesus identifies the first prophet as Abel.³⁸ A billions-of-years timetable would place Abel at the end, not at the foundation of the world.

Jesus said, regarding His second coming, *'But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.'*³⁹ It is clear that Jesus believed in a global flood and used it as a comparison to the final, complete judgement.

Notice, this same theme is picked up by the apostle Peter, where he writes in his second letter that *'by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.'*⁴⁰

Paul also assumes that people were around from the creation of the world when he writes, *'for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.'*⁴¹

John MacArthur, author of *The Battle for the Beginning*, states it very strongly:

' . . . all sorts of theological mischief ensues when we reject or compromise the literal truth of the biblical account of creation and the fall of Adam. . . it is a necessary inconsistency if one is to affirm an old earth and remain evangelical. . . in an important sense, everything Scripture says about our salvation through Jesus Christ hinges on the literal truth of what Genesis 1-3 teaches about Adam's creation and fall. There is no

³⁸ See also Acts 3:21

³⁹ Matthew 24:37-39

⁴⁰ 2 Peter 3:5-7

⁴¹ Romans 1:20. See Ref. 65, p. 81 for further explanation.

more pivotal passage of Scripture. What old-earth creationists (including, to a large degree, even the evangelical ones) are doing with Genesis 1-3 is precisely what religious liberals have always done with all of Scripture—spiritualizing and reinterpreting the text allegorically to make it mean what they want it to mean. It is a dangerous way to handle Scripture. And it involves a perilous and unnecessary capitulation to the religious presuppositions of naturalism—not to mention a serious dishonor to God.

Evangelicals who accept an old-earth interpretation of Genesis have embraced a hermeneutic that is hostile to a high view of Scripture. They are bringing to the opening chapters of Scripture a method of biblical interpretation that has built-in antievangelical presuppositions. Those who adopt this approach have already embarked on a process that invariably overthrows faith. Churches and colleges that embrace this view will not remain evangelical long.⁴²

IV. Scientific Credibility of a Literal Genesis

Is the Genesis account scientifically credible? Absolutely! There is only one truth. God's Word agrees with God's world. I believe there is overwhelming logical, philosophical, scientific, archeological and historical evidence that is consistent with Genesis 1-11. I will not attempt to defend this claim here. However, I would like to mention that there is an abundance of resources available to support my claim.⁴³ I have found that there is overwhelming evidence that God created the universe, that the earth is not billions of years old, that there really was a global flood, and so on. There are scholarly feasibility studies⁴⁴ that examine issues such as Noah's ark, animals as being universally vegetarian before the flood, or the origin of races.

Is there scientific evidence that the earth is only thousands of years old? Allow me to first mention that I believe the doctrines of a recent six-day creation and a global flood stand or fall together. Either the layers of rocks and fossils all around the world are from millions of years of evolutionary history, or they are the result of a watery, global catastrophe. Once we start to reinterpret Genesis one, we will soon need to reinterpret Genesis 6-9.

⁴² Ref. 9, p. 19-20.

⁴³ For example, check out the following websites for a wealth of online material, for a list of resources which can be ordered, and for listings of professionals who have or are compiling evidence which supports the Genesis 1-11 account: www.answersingenesis.org and www.icr.org.

⁴⁴ The purpose of a feasibility study is not to provide proof, but to demonstrate the probability or possibility of something.

Regarding the age of the earth, Dr. Henry Morris has documented 76 phenomena, such as the decaying of the earth's magnetic field, that indicate that the earth is much less than 4.6 billion years old.⁴⁵ There are literally hundreds of scholarly books which show evidence that the earth is only thousands of years old.⁴⁶ Recently, unfossilized dinosaur bones have been found in North America which indicate that dinosaurs lived here only thousands, not millions of years ago.⁴⁷

Regarding Noah's flood, there is overwhelming evidence that the fossil record does not represent millions of years of evolution, but instead is testimony of a global flood.⁴⁸ The geologic column is best understood as the result of the successive burial of different environments by water. Massive fossil graveyards, abundant polystrate fossils⁴⁹, marine fossils on every major mountain range, significant numbers of turbidites (which are sediments formed by colossal underwater landslides), "out of sequence" fossils, soft sediment deformation, and so on, are best interpreted in light of a worldwide flood.⁵⁰

What about fossil evidence of intermediate species? What about radiometric dating? What about all the scientific evidence for evolution? There is none. Evolution is a framework based on the false assumption of naturalism. As Professor D.M.S. Watson, one of the leading scientists of his day, wrote:

⁴⁵ *The Young Earth*, ICR Impact Series No. 17. Old-earthers will invariably point to radiometric dating as solid proof that the earth is old. However, there are some serious problems with radiometric dating methods, which the experts in the area recognize. It is a method based on several unproven assumptions. The on-going Radioisotopes and the Age of The Earth (RATE) research project, conducted by Vardimann et al., is showing some astounding evidence that radiometric dating methods do not prove the earth is old. One interesting aspect of the study involves studying the rate of escape of helium, a bi-product of radioactive decay, from rocks. There is simply too much helium in the rocks, it escapes too fast from the rocks, and there is too little helium in the atmosphere, for these phenomena to be explained as billions of years of radioactive decay.

⁴⁶ See, for example, the list of books that Henry Morris gave a few years ago – *A Young-Earth Creationist Bibliography*, ICR Impact #269, November 1995.

⁴⁷ *Creation ex Nihilo*, 19(3), June-August 1992, p. 16-17 and *Creation Ex Nihilo* 19(4) September-November 1997, p. 42-43.

⁴⁸ Many notable geologists such as Steve Austin, John Morris, John Woodmorappe, Ariel Roth and many more, have done wonderful work in this area. Check out the websites suggested earlier (Ref. 43) for an unabundance of evidence. Dr. Gary Parker's class in Paleontology at ICR is very enlightening as well.

⁴⁹ These are fossils that cut across two or more rock strata. This would imply that all the rock layers in which the fossil is in were laid down at approximately the same time, not thousands or millions of years apart.

⁵⁰ For a good treatment of these topics and more, read *The Genesis Flood* by John Whitcomb and Henry Morris or *The Young Earth* by John Morris.

*'Evolution [is] a theory universally accepted not because it can be proven by logically coherent evidence to be true, but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible.'*⁵¹

The Genesis creation account is true as written. We know this by faith according to Hebrews 11:3. This is not a “shot in the dark” type of faith. It is faith based solidly on the words of God. If we are willing to accept the creation account as given in Genesis, then we have a powerful framework in which to study science and history.

V. Where do we Stand as Churches?

So how does your Church view the first few chapters of Genesis? What do the some of the major Reformed confessions⁵² say about creation? Do they indicate a belief in six-day creation for example? Allow me to refer to four well-known confessions.

1. The Heidelberg Catechism indicates that God created man good, and after His own image.⁵³ It also explains how man’s depravity comes from the sin of Adam and Eve, our first parents, in Paradise.⁵⁴ It explains that God created the heaven and earth out of nothing and upholds and governs the same.⁵⁵

2. The Canons of Dordt teach that man was originally formed after the image of God,⁵⁶ and that after the fall that man begat children in his own depraved likeness.⁵⁷

3. The Belgic Confession teaches the complete divine providence of God⁵⁸, that man was created out of the dust, yet in the image of God⁵⁹, and original sin extends to all mankind because of Adam’s sin.⁶⁰

⁵¹ D.M.S. Watson, “Adaptation,” *Nature*, 124:233, 1929.

⁵² The Free Reformed Church and other like-minded churches subscribe to at least three confessions known as the three forms of unity. These are the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt.

⁵³ Q/A # 6

⁵⁴ Q/A # 7

⁵⁵ Q/A # 26

⁵⁶ Third and fourth heads of doctrine, Article 1.

⁵⁷ Third and fourth heads of doctrine, Article 2.

⁵⁸ Article 13

⁵⁹ Article 14

4. The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646, is a little clearer when it adds that God created *'in the space of six days.'*⁶¹

Although not all the confessions spell it out in so many words, we believe Scripture clearly teaches that God created the universe in six normal days, a few thousand years ago. In short, we maintain that Genesis is plain literal history. This has been the dominant view of the early church and of the Reformers as well, as eminent theologian, Louis Berkhof affirms:

*'Theophilus was the first Church Father to stress the fact that the days of creation were literal days. This seems to have been the view of Irenaeus and Tertullian as well, and was in all probability the common view in the Church. . . . The Reformers held firmly to the doctrine of creation out of nothing by a free act of God in or with time, and regarded the days of creation as six literal days. This view is also generally maintained in the Post-Reformation literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though a few theologians (as Maresius) occasionally speak of "continous creation". In the eighteenth century, however, under the dominating influence of Pantheism and Materialism, science launched an attack on the Church's doctrine of creation. It substituted the idea of evolution or development for that of absolute origination by a divine fiat. The world was often represented as a necessary manifestation of the Absolute. Its origin was pushed back thousands and even millions of years into an unknown past. And soon theologians were engaged in various attempts to harmonize the doctrine of creation with the teachings of science and philosophy. Some suggested that the first chapters of Genesis should be interpreted allegorically or mythically; others, that a long period elapsed between the primary creation of Genesis 1:1,2 and the secondary creation of the following verses; and still others, that the days of creation were in fact long periods of time.'*⁶²

⁶⁰ Article 15

⁶¹ Chapter IV, article one

⁶² Berkhof, Louis, *Systematic Theology*, WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, p. 126-127, 1941. See also p. 17 of Ref. 8.

Why is it not clearly spelled out in some of the confessions then? Does this mean, as some have proposed, that the issue is merely secondary? No. Obviously, the issue of creation versus evolution was not an issue for the church before the 19th century, for this century marked the advent of Lyell, Wallace, Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, and others who devised and promoted the ideas of an ancient earth and of the evolution of living things from a common ancestor. Scripture is so clear about creation, that to spell out the details in the confessions would have been overly concise at the time.

The official statement of the beliefs of the Free Reformed Church includes the statement that *'We believe that the days in the creation account in Genesis 1, are twenty-four hour days.'*⁶³ Clearly, this is a most necessary inclusion, considering the rampant confusion regarding this issue.

VI. Conclusion

Henry and John Morris⁶⁴ explain that the one aspect of Genesis that is attacked most is *'the biblical doctrine of recent creation in six literal days, which then implies also the worldwide Flood. The evolutionist, realizing the weakness of the scientific case for evolution when he really tries to defend it, will almost always direct his main arguments not against creation per se, but against recent creation and its corollary, flood geology.'*⁶⁵

This is a telling statement. Many Christians loudly tout the evidence for Intelligent design. There are many excellent scholars who have shown compelling evidence for the existence of God. I really commend their work. However, many of those who are part of what is termed the "intelligent design movement"⁶⁶ have capitulated to some form of evolutionized interpretation of Genesis, and will go no further than admit that there is an Intelligent Designer.

⁶³ *Introducing the Free Reformed Churches of North America*, Free Reformed Publications, St. Thomas, p. 8, 1996.

⁶⁴ Henry is founder and president emeritus of the Institute for Creation Research in California. His son John is currently the president.

⁶⁵ Morris, Henry and John, *The Modern Creation Trilogy: Scripture and Creation*, Master Books, Green Forest, p. 74, 1996.

⁶⁶ For an excellent evaluation, see Mortenson, T., *The Intelligent Design Movement*, *TJ*, 15(3), 2001, p. 49-51. He points out for example that Phillip Johnson, a leading IDM (Intelligent Design Movement) proponent, states that *'Christians who want to think rightly about the creation-evolution debate and engage with skeptics on the subject can, indeed should, ignore Genesis!'* This is obviously a fatal flaw. God knows everything, so His account is obviously the ultimate resource on the topic of creation versus evolution. Although discussing evidence for intelligent design may be an excellent beginning with atheists and agnostics, the IDM cannot explain the real world completely. The IDM fails to recognize, for example, that the biological world must be understood in light of God's curse on creation. The IDM also assumes that the age of the earth and universe is not important in the creation-

We need to go further. We need to have a worldview that is completely biblical. God's Word, not human reason must be the foundation for our thinking. Genesis gives us the record of creation and many important subsequent events. According to Genesis, the creation of the world occurred in the span of 6 days, a few thousand years ago. According to Genesis, there was a global flood, which killed all people and animals, except those on the ark. Thus, the fossil record does not represent millions of years of evolution, but powerfully testifies to the judgment of God on sin.

We need to believe and proclaim all of God's Word. God's Word stands or falls together. The "liar from the beginning" loves to get his sword of doubt wedged anywhere in the Scriptures, especially Genesis. I guarantee you, that if you start with the assumption that Genesis means exactly what it says, then you will have the best framework to understanding science, history, archeology, and all the social sciences, such as education, psychology, and so on. You will soon find that the academic data fit wonderfully within this framework. This will make you more confident about the truth of the entire Bible. You will be better able to "defend the faith", including seemingly difficult questions such as "Where did Cain get his wife?" or "Were there dinosaurs on the ark?" or "What about radiometric dating methods?" or "If there is so much suffering, hardship and death, how can there be a God who is good and totally sovereign?"

We need to hold fast to the Bible. We need to respect the authority of the Word of God. *'All Scripture is God-breathed'*⁶⁷, *'Thy Word is truth!'*⁶⁸ Let us give due honour to the one true God who *'created the heaven and the earth'* in the beginning by the *'breath of his mouth'*, the

evolution conflict. Nothing can be further from the truth! Historically, naturalism gained control of geology and of astronomy before it conquered the biological sciences. In fact, an ancient universe lies at the heart of naturalism since the geological sciences and the astronomical sciences lay the foundation for the biological sciences, with regard to evolution. It is not surprising to find deists, pantheists, and so on in the IDM. As Mortenson writes, *'This approach of just looking for design and using it in defense of the existence of God (however vaguely He may be defined) has been tried before (in the early 1800s in England) primarily by Christians and Deists who accepted the idea of an Earth much older than the Bible teaches. And it failed miserably to convert infidels or to stop the cultural slide away from Biblical Christianity toward atheism. I think it failed precisely because the theology was fuzzy and there was shallow analysis of the philosophical assumptions of old-Earth geological and old-universe astronomical theories. In contrast, many people, even scientists, are being won to Christ, and Christians are being won back to faith in Scripture by the use of young-Earth creationist arguments.'*

⁶⁷ 2 Timothy 3:16

⁶⁸ John 17:17

God who 'spoke, and it was done.'⁶⁹ 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.'⁷⁰

Appendix A: Using Genesis as an Interpretive Framework in Academics

One reason why many reject the historicity of Genesis is because they do not understand how Genesis can act as an interpretive framework in academics. When we study science in this way, we obtain, what many call the creation model. The creation model is the result of studying the world through the glasses of Scripture. Let's consider an example of how taking Genesis as literal can be used to explain observed phenomena.

Many think that the Bible teaches the concept of fixidity of species. This is the idea that God originally created the plant and animal species exactly the way they are today. However, when we use our faculties of logic and observation in the biological realm, this concept is absurd. Because of this caricature, many biologists have reject the Genesis account of creation "out of hand".

However, we know from Genesis that God created categories of plants and animals. The phrase "after his kind" or "after their kind" appears 10 times in Genesis one. Each of these kinds, which we will call created kinds, would have a tremendous amount of genetic information with the potential to diversify as they adapted to various environments. After creation, as time passed, various species would arise from each created kind. Then when the Flood came, 1656 years after creation, God would have ensured that two (or seven) representatives of each kind of animal were on the ark: we will call these ark-kinds. Again, as time proceeded after the Flood, the ark-kinds would begin to adapt to their environments, forming new species.⁷¹ However, this is not evolution.⁷² This is merely what some creationists call adaptive radiation.

⁶⁹ Genesis 1:1; Psalm 33:6,9

⁷⁰ Revelation 4:11. It is a terrible thought to imagine God creating a world where animals hunted, killed and ate each other for millions of years, all for His pleasure. Of course we know this is not true!

⁷¹ Species would only form within a kind. In other words, a reptile will not eventually change into a mammal. However, wolves, coyotes, dingos, and domesticated dogs could all form from one dog kind.

⁷² Evolutionist writers will generally call this evolution, or microevolution. They define any change in allele frequency within a population as evolution. Since this is observable science, they assume that evolution is fact. Then they extrapolate by assuming that since microevolution can produce different species within a certain type of living organism, therefore, given enough time, all species could have arisen from one original living organism. In

Let's consider a feasible way in which the various cat species might have formed, in light of the creation model. We will assume that God created two cat kinds: two sabre-toothed cats and two "main" cats. These cats soon began to multiply and fill the earth. As time progressed before the flood, each of these two cat kinds might have diverged to produce three cat species each, for a total of six cat species. Before the flood came, God might have taken two cat kinds, each a representative of the original two kinds, for a total of four cats, onto the ark. Then things would start over again after the flood. The two representatives of each cat kind would begin to multiply and fill the earth. Again, the genetic potential for diversification would become evident, as new and different environments began to fill up. Quite rapidly, within a few generations, new species of cats would develop. Technical names for the mechanisms that would produce this speciation are: Mutation, migration, small populations⁷³, nonrandom mating, and natural selection. Soon, the two ark-cat-kinds developed into four genera: *Smilodon* (sabre-tooths), *Panthera* (big cats), *Felis* (smaller cats), and *Acinonyx* (cheetahs). All the various cat species on earth today fall within these four genera.⁷⁴

From a Genesis perspective, we can explain the origin of various cat species without guessing that cats evolved from another life form. We can do the same for other organisms. There are many scientists doing research to study the origin and development of various species of organisms. This has sparked the whole field of Baraminology.⁷⁵

Note however, that Genesis and genetics both indicate that each kind of animal will not become another kind. A cat will never evolve into a dog, dragonfly, or daisy.⁷⁶

other words, they extrapolate from microevolution to macroevolution, which is, bluntly put, a hopelessly blind faith with no evidence.

⁷³ For example, genetic drift which includes population bottleneck and the founder effect. These would have been very significant after creation and after the flood.

⁷⁴ For a more detailed explanation of this topic, check out answersingenesis.org/home/area/magazines/docs/v22n3_liger.asp. This article was published in *Creation Ex Nihilo* 22(3):28–33, June–August, 2000.

⁷⁵ Baraminology is the study of the "created kinds." Based on numerous fascinating experiments, the general consensus in the creation community is that generally, the "family" in the Linnaean classification system is about equal to the created-kind or the ark-kind. See article in Ref. 74.

⁷⁶ This would require vast quantities of new genetic information, plus an incredulous mechanism (with amazing foresight) to correctly select the appropriate genetic information to pass on to the next generation. This is in contrast to adaptive radiation (or "microevolution") which has all the potential genetic information there to begin with!