

THE AGE OF THE EARTH?

An Appeal For Christian Unity Across the Barrier of Time.

It's a daunting challenge to reconcile the conflicting reality of mankind's slavery to time with God's timelessness; but, it seems to me necessary to understanding some of the great questions underpinning an unseemly and unnecessary conflict among the people of God. I am referring to the conflict over the age of the Earth. Of itself, it is a question of little practical importance. However, two supremely important issues are wrongly merged into it—naturalistic, or Darwinian Evolution and all the destructive cultural baggage that accompanies it, and, the reliability of Biblical revelation upon which the best of Christian civilization is built. Yes, dear reader, that is a highly pejorative statement, but I need make no apology for being highly partisan on the issue. Demonstrably, the best interests of humanity are to be found on the side of Biblical revelation. The question in contest among the people of God, is just what is the true Biblical revelation about the age of the earth.

Unfortunately, this age of the earth 'wedge issue' between Christians may be a barrier, a 'turn off', to those seeking the God of Biblical revelation. That is my reason for venturing into this controversy, not simply to dispute with fellow believers over so esoteric an issue as the age of the earth. So, for any of you, dear readers, who may have the impression that a true Bible believing Christian has to accept a 'literal' six day creation and a young earth, I want to assure you that such an impression simply is not true.

I am a born again sinner saved by the grace of God through the blood of Christ Bible thumping Fundamentalist, and still, I admit to being something of an agnostic on the age of the earth. I cannot fit what I have seen into the six thousand odd years of earth history tabulated by Bishop Usher and upheld by the 'Young Earth Creationists'. From my own Bible study, I doubt that the Genesis creation account "day" was ever intended to be taken as a literal 24 hour solar cycle. Nor, though, do I necessarily see the billions of years that main stream science deduces; there are too many questionable assumptions in their methodology, and far too much ideological bias to bank on their accounting. My views fall closer to, but not necessarily fully within, the "Old Earth Creationist" camp, which generally accepts the latest 'scientific' findings on the age of the earth.

Furthermore, as a very practical person, I see no burning need to cling to either of these ideologies. Many, and I suspect most, Christians, hold some less than rigid view on the age of the earth. We cling to what we know to be true, and reserve judgment on what we don't. But the well publicized battles of the Young Earthers with professional atheists obscures Christians' diversity of opinion on the 'days of creation'. And I fully understand, and sympathize with those who admire the Young Earth champions, even though I can't agree with them.

You may wonder why I am so sympathetic with something I don't believe. It is precisely because of the havoc wreaked upon the world by those professional atheists who have engineered an illusion of incompatibility between science and the Christian faith, with the resulting destruction of our society, of human value, human life, sound education, and assault upon personal freedom endowed by our Creator. For generations now, our Christian culture has, in general, meekly surrendered to their abuse. Now comes the Young Earthers with the pugnacious temerity to

challenge the atheistic orthodoxy of government, academia, and media — hooray for them! But the so called 'literal' interpretation of the Genesis creation account (24 hour creation "days" and a six thousand year old earth) is not the hill for Christians to die upon, and I would not want seekers after the Christian faith to be dissuaded by this false impression.

By the way, thanks for accompanying me on this little excursion into these deep subjects. Time, it has been noted, is our most precious possession, and yet our most casually wasted. What, you may well ask, are my credentials for asking a bit of your time? I have degrees in both geology and Biblical studies. I made my living for more than forty years as a geologist, and I have seen a lot of this old earth up-close. After a life altering encounter with the Living Christ, I also began to study God's word seriously. That included taking a Master's Degree in Religion with a concentration in Biblical Hebrew and Old Testament studies. The subjects I am inviting you into are ones I have spent much of my adult life studying and teaching.

However, despite these years of study, I have to consider myself, as you should, only an educated layman on these subjects. The chief lesson I have learned about Biblical Hebrew, is that proper translation is a job for experts, but experts who approach the sacred text with reverence. What I have to offer you, my dear readers, is a summary of the best scholarship on these subjects that I can muster, presented in a manner suitable for interested lay readers. Please understand that the time I ask of you is because of the importance of the subject matter, not the importance of your host.

The point that I shall attempt to make, if you are so good as to continue with me, is that Christian faith is not hostage to the age of the earth question, and there is no conflict between true science and Scripture. So let's delve into a bit of church history, what the Bible tells us about the nature of time and God (as far as I am able to guide you), the age of the earth, and God's plan for mankind (something that is generally overlooked in this controversy):

1. A Young Earth cosmology was never a universal criterion of the Christian faith. Many of the early church fathers, some who died for the faith, held views contrary to that. The fundamental creeds of the church are silent on that issue; they deal with belief in the nature and mission of Jesus the Christ. C. S. Lewis, in his wonderful WWII era defense of traditional Christian doctrines, *Mere Christianity*, makes the point that most of the issues that divide Christians are not integral to the saving faith set forth in the early church creeds. I include a couple of versions of the oldest Christian Creed, The Apostles Creed, below:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy catholic Church (i.e. universal Church), the Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen.

<https://billygraham.org/answer/what-is-the-apostles-creed/>

*I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty, from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church (i.e. Roman Catholic), the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.
Amen.*

https://www.vaticannews.va/en/prayers/the-apostles_-creed.html

I have included these two versions: Protestant/Baptist, and Roman Catholic, to illustrate their unity, although they do differ about the nature of Catholic/catholic church. But notice what they do not contain: any mention of the age of the earth, only that God created it. Yes, some later creeds and 'confessions' do include fealty to a 24 hour creation day, but the issue was pretty quite from the Reformation Era until the mid-19th Century; and that is an important aspect of this question that we will take up later. There are important issues not mentioned in the Apostle's Creed, of course, some of them well worth contending for, but a diversity of opinion on the issue of the Genesis 'day' has always been accepted, or at least tolerated, in the church, and it should be today. I am demonstrating that Christian freedom right now.

Perhaps more to the real point of the concern — it would be wrong to assume that being "liberal" rather than "literal" on the creation days implies any lack of support for true Biblical doctrines specified by the Church Creeds. It doesn't! You will note that I placed "liberal" and "literal" in quotes. That is because those terms are misused in this controversy, as I will attempt to illustrate.

2. Having, I hope, reassured people that holding differing views on the age of the earth, and investigating alternative views is perfectly appropriate for Christians, let's lay some groundwork for evaluating those differing views; beginning at the beginning, with the nature of God. The God of the Bible, as creator of space and time ("*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" Genesis 1:1), necessarily exists prior to and outside the confines of created space and time. The Hebrew word translated 'created' is an unusual word, used only of the action of God, signifying an original creation, rather than a remaking of some pre-existing material. This usage has come to be known as the Doctrine of Creation Ex-Nihilo, or 'Creation from Nothing'. It is unique among the cosmologies of the ancient world, whose creation myths involve use of some pre-existing material.

We have a very good description of Creation Ex-Nihilo in Hebrews 11:3: "*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*" That is the King James translation, all others are similar in wording. To my way of thinking, however, the earliest complete English translation, the Coverdale Bible, hits closest to the mark; '*all things which are seen were made of naught by the word of God*' (in my slightly modernized wording, but the key word "naught" is original).

It is that separation of God from his physical creation that made the incarnation (in the flesh) of God necessary—so that He could interact with His physical/temporal creation. How could God in human form have been present from the beginning, as

we are told in scripture (John 1:3; *'All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.'*, and many other verses), if he was born into the world at the beginning of the Christian Era? That apparent confusion of time is something we will come to shortly.

Religions with the 'creator' as part of some unspecified pre-existing material of an eternal cosmos are known as 'Pantheistic'; from pan (universal) and theos (god). We might say creator and creature are all rolled up in one stuff, and have a rough moral, spiritual, and physical equivalence. The Creator revealed in the Judeo-Christian sacred scriptures, however, is a "Holy God". The word translated "holy" means 'separate from', not a part of the common stuff of our world. God created the substance of the heavens and the earth, and man is made from the dust of the ground; quite apart from the substance of God.

That difference is of special importance as it relates to the human spirit. Pantheistic religions such as Hinduism and New Age cultism understand the human spirit as free standing, immortal, even eternal, in its own right. The Biblical revelation, however, makes it plain that human spirit, like life, is the gift of God, existing completely at the pleasure of God. Therefore, God has a legitimate right to rule over mankind.

Both Pantheism and Monotheism (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) are 'Dualistic' religions, understanding human nature as having a dual reality: physical and spiritual. The Atheistic/Naturalistic pseudo-religions are, theoretically, 'Monist'; that is, presuming that man has only a physical existence. As the so-called "German Darwin", Ernst Haeckel, admitted however, common 'Monism' is essentially a form of Pantheism, with man assuming the role of god.

Pantheism and Atheistic Naturalism are comfortable allies against Monotheistic religion. Both religions believe in an eternal, self-existent cosmos (known scientifically as the 'Steady State Theory') which includes everything: all the material world, and, for the Pantheists, the spiritual world also.

The discovery of the expanding universe (the 'Big Bang'), implying that the cosmos had a beginning, was a distressing jolt to them, especially to the so-called 'scientists' of the atheistic cult. So much so that they concocted the idea of an 'oscillating universe' in which the universe eternally cycles between expansion to a dead stop, then under gravitational self-attraction, contraction to a minuscule 'singularity', explosion and expansion again. Billions of taxpayer dollars have been poured into research to prove this scheme, with mixed results, but satisfying to them I suppose. To Pantheists, already believers in cycles of reincarnation, an eternally cycling universe is quite satisfactory.

The Judeo-Christian revelation adds something else to God's legitimate right to rule; the Bible reveals that God loves His creation, and especially His creatures made in His image—mankind ("For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16). That, too, is a great difference between the religions, and though it may seem off subject, it is actually central to it.

3. Having established that God is separate from His creation, I want to tackle separating God from time as we understand it. For lack of a better description, we might say that, in existing outside time, God exists only in the present; **now**, which

is how God described himself: "I AM". It is that inexplicable characteristic of God which may explain the 'apparent time confusion' of the incarnation. Let's take a further look at that self-declaration of God in Chapter Three of Exodus. Moses sees a burning bush, but the bush is not consumed by the fire. His curiosity kindled, Moses *'turns aside to see this great sight'*. And what an astounding sight it must have been; not a fireproof bush basking in flames, but a bush burning, and yet, not consumed. I can't picture it in my mind, but it certainly was a miracle of high order, an illustration, perhaps, of dominion over time itself, that something could appear in two states at once, existence and non-existence.

With that astounding visualization of His power and nature, God proceeds to announce that *"I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."* Not 'I was the God of your father'; but "I am the God of your father"; a continuing, unchanged relationship despite the passage of centuries.

When Moses is told to go back to Egypt to lead his people out of bondage, he asks the name of the one who sends him; God gives that seemingly enigmatic answer *"I AM THAT I AM, tell them I AM has sent me"*. What does that mean? This particular 'I AM' (different from the previous 'I am') is literally 'I exist', and we take it to be a declaration of God's self-existence.

Like most Hebrew words, these do admit of some latitude in interpretation. Some scholars, although a minority, interpret it as meaning God is able to deliver on His promises, something like 'I AM ABLE'; which in no way would detract from a declaration of self-existence, it simply adds to it.

The Hebrew word translated in the KJV and many other translations as the pronoun 'that' offers some latitude also. It may be rendered as 'who', 'what', 'which', and even 'because'. I rather like 'I AM because I AM'.

The original Hebrew "I AM" became a sacred name, the Covenant Name of God. In most Hebraic uses, the title 'Lord', or the third person 'He is', is substituted for "I AM" because it is sacrilege to use the sacred name.

A further evidence of the timelessness of God is seen in the very frequent use of "everlasting" and the term "from everlasting to everlasting", as we see in this case: *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."* Psalm 90:2

The Hebrew word translated 'everlasting' in this King James Version and most other translations is also translated as 'eternal' in some Bible versions, and that is its proper meaning in our modern usage. The Hebrew word, however, has its origin in an older root word meaning 'out of sight'. That seems totally appropriate to its meaning in Biblical revelation; from man's perspective, God's origin is out of sight in the past, and God's destiny is out of sight in the future. In other words, God's nature is beyond our scope of understanding.

Another hint as to the timelessness of God is found in the continuation of Psalm 90. In verse 4, we read *"For in Your sight a thousand years are but a day that passes, or a watch of the night."* St. Peter reiterated that revelation *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."* 2 Peter 3:8. The clear implication of this is the

irrelevance of time to God. That is an important fact to bear in mind as we continue this quest for understanding the age of the earth; God does not experience time as we humans do, and we should not attempt to force our time dependence onto our understanding of God.

4. As a Bible believer, I am committed to faith in its message, and I find that it does not command a 'literal' six day creation, or a young earth. The Hebrew word translated as 'day' is used hundreds of times in many different ways, even in several ways within the creation account; for a 24 hour earth rotational cycle (Gn. 1:5 second part), for the daylight portion of the cycle (Gn. 1:5 first part), and for an indefinite period of time related to some particular event (Gn. 2:4). Since there is no closure of the Seventh Day, it can be inferred that the Seventh Day is still ongoing after thousands of years. There are many other such words used in different ways in different contexts throughout the Hebrew Scriptures (as there are in most, if not all, languages) which are not so rigidly held to one meaning.

Young Earthers correctly point out that the best practice in translation is to translate a word or phrase according to its most common usage. In the case of the Hebrew "day", that would be as a twenty-four hour earth rotational cycle. However, it is also established best practice to consider context, and common sense in translating a word.

If we assume that the writer of the book of Genesis is logical and factual, which I do, then a 24 hour day creates many unnecessary inconsistencies within the text (not to mention with the geological record). For instance, the sun, apparently, was not created until the fourth day. I am at a loss to understand 24 hour days without the sun; both as light giver and gravitational center of the solar system.

It would be ridiculous to assume that the writer of Genesis, with or without divine inspiration, didn't understand the relation of sun and daylight. The Bible, in fact, displays surprising understanding of natural processes. For instance, in Ecclesiastes 1:7 we see the hydrologic cycle described: *All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.* We see that bit of science paired with a complex metaphorical comment on life in the next verse: *All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.* The text and the very grammatical structure of the book reveals a highly advanced culture, intellectually, if not in technology. We must look beyond these obvious seeming contradictions to understand it.

6. If these 'days' are not to be taken 'literally' as consecutive 24 hour periods, then are there alternative views consistent with belief in the true revelation of the Bible? There are many theories on that subject, too many and too complicated for this short commentary, so I will touch upon them only in a brief and general way.

There is the suggestion that the days were not meant to refer to sequential time periods at all, but some other organizing principle; several have been suggested. We can see some groupings of activities in the 'days'; creating the architecture of space time, the establishment of life on earth, etc, though they seem to overlap.

It seems that the fourth, fifth, and sixth days mirror the first, second and third days respectively, as something of a fulfillment: 'light' on the first day, 'lights in the firmament' on the fourth; 'waters' on the second day, 'whales', etc. on the fifth;

'grass and herbs', etc. on the third day, and the dry land animals that feed on them on the sixth day. Days of fulfillment would not necessarily be chronological days, as fulfillment might require varying lengths of time.

There are a variety of "Gap" theories: a gap between the initial creation in verse 1, and God speaking in verse 2, initiating the first "day"; single days of creation with gaps between the days, and so forth. These seem designed to force 24 hour 'days' onto an old world, rather than properly translate the scripture.

There are the 'day age' theories, such as the Genesis 'days' are a thousand years, taken from Psalm 90, verse 4 which we looked at already. Again, that view seems to be a rather clumsy attempt to force a few more years into the creation account; an insignificant amount too.

A more popular view of the Creation account is as allegory. That view is held by many Christians in broad and not well defined terms. To understand that, we must separate allegory from myth; they are not the same. An allegory expresses truth, one might say it universalizes a truth. We seldom think of them as such, but the parables of Jesus are allegories: the prodigal son, the good Samaritan, the lost sheep, the sower and the four types of soil. These are all stories expressing truths, put in a form people can understand, but they rise above that. A woman hunts for a lost coin two thousand years ago, so what? That literal fact has no significance for us. But, the allegorical fact, that God seeks the lost among us, is of great significance. It should not be inconceivable that the Creation Account is, at least in part, allegorical.

And there we get into really deep waters. There is the fact that only God was present at the Creation, and if God is outside time, the whole creation was, from God's perspective, (for lack of better terminology) instantaneous and simultaneous. In which case, any time divisions would be artificial constructs to explain the creation in simple, human terms. This was the view of several of the early Jewish and Christian scholars, and that view has continued until today.

I cannot conceive of the acts of these 'days' being fully independent and consecutive, as a literal reading seems to make them, so 'simultaneous' seems to me to be a key ingredient, perhaps with the completion or milestone of some act being memorialized in each 'day'.

We have two great impediments to solving the riddle of the creation 'day'. We have to remember that Genesis was written thousands of years ago in a largely alien language and culture. The second impediment is far greater than the distance in language and culture, it is the distance between God and man. Making the proper distinction between literal, allegorical, and...well, simply not understood is a challenge, but we must cling to the things we are sure of, and not let our journey be stymied by what we don't understand.

7. Are there any arguments for an old earth within the Genesis account? Yes, I think so, some that comport perfectly with the geological record. I will delve briefly into that now.

The first command given to mankind (Gn. 2:28) is "*Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it*". It is God's stated purpose to create a people and a family for himself (Gn. 1:26; Rm. 8:28, 29; 2 Cor. 6:18; 1 John 3:1,2, and many

more). So how did He go about it? Did He create six billion humans instantly? Well, no... and then again, yes, depending upon one's perspective. To God, it was an instantaneous creation of all the billions of mankind past, present, and future. To time bound humanity, no, it was, and is, a long process. But the point is this, God accomplished his will through a process; natural procreation. And that process has taken time, and is still in progress.

The same can be said for "every living creature" (before the creation of man); "*God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.*" Genesis 1:22. Any process takes time, some more than others; how long did it take to "fill the waters"? I would think a rather long time.

So what other processes might God have set in motion that would give some hint of time? God knew the needs of his creation, and supplied us abundantly with balanced gravitational and centrifugal forces, sunshine, air, water, etc. which doubtless required some process. But there are other needs more in my line as an old geologist. God knew that mankind, and the rest of the animal creation would need food. Genesis 2:5 reveals that there were plants before there was man "to till the ground". So God had provided soil for his creation also. But soil is not so simple as one might think, and is the result of a time consuming geologic process.

We know that "God can do all things". But does that negate the necessity of a time consuming process? Here we run into the question of the nature and "limits of omnipotence". C. S. Lewis went into that question in his great little book ***The Problem of Pain***. In it, he illustrates the limits of God's omnipotence; even God cannot create something that is inherently self-contradictory. His point is that God can't create man with true free will, and not provide man with the conditions to choose evil. Free will without the possibility of choosing wrong would not be true free will, and therefore not a real 'thing'.

I don't say that the question of 'process' rises to the level of self-contradiction, but it does raise the interesting question of 'Could God create something instantaneously that seems to require lengthy process', and 'Would God do that'? Surely we can balance this apparent discrepancy with the understanding that to God, the doing of 'all things' was instantaneous, and man was not there to time it.

God knew that mankind would need energy resources beyond that supplied by the Sun. He also knew that the forests and fields would eventually be destroyed by the rising demand for fuel. So He has used his servant, time, to provide us with vast forests, or at least their carbonized energy resources, stacked up, awaiting man's need, and intelligence and ingenuity to develop. But the provision of coal resources required process, and that process requires time—time to grow the forests, to bury them, convert them into coal, and retrieve them from the depths for our use. To me, the coal fields declare great ages gone by, but they also declare the glory of God in His provision for us, for without coal, our civilization and our population would have cratered generations ago.

Likewise with tools. Man was designed with the intelligence, ingenuity, and curiosity to need evermore, and ever more complex tools. His first simple tools were made of flint, or chert. Flint, at least the most widely used type, requires a lengthy process of weathering rock, concentration of silica in seabed sediments, crystallization into a mineral/rock, uplift and erosion so it would be available to

primitive man. It is the same with iron ore, and the other metals and industrial minerals up to and including the 'rare earth' metals in such demand by the advanced technology required to supply the needs of billions of people; they all needed process and time.

I think God is proud of his creation as they discover and use his bounteous provision to 'subdue' the earth. Yes, utilization of His provisions requires hard, often dangerous work, but work is not a curse. In fact, it was an original part of God's blessing on Adam. Those who go down in mines, like "Those who go down to the sea in ships...see the works of the Lord" and that is a good thing. It is human failings, greed and callousness, that have made work so much more arduous than God would have it.

Practically everyone who observes the features of the land around them have noted an 'appearance of great age'. And I would agree with those who call it 'a record of great age'. But this 'appearance' of great age has always been a weakness of Young Earth Cosmology, and skeptics have asked "Why would God create the world with the false appearance of great age?" For those, like myself, who have studied the earth, it would have to be a miraculously clever deceit, hardly in keeping with God's character — fossils of plants and animals that never lived, remains of seas that never were, mountains that never rose, volcanoes that never blew. As a counter to that telling argument, modern Young Earth Creationists more and more rely upon Catastrophism for support. That was the view of geological science before the idea of 'Uniformitarianism' took hold in the early Nineteenth Century.

The latter doctrine holds that we can understand geologic history by geologic processes commonly operating today. It emphasizes time as the main agent of geologic change; vast amounts of time. Catastrophism, on the other hand, emphasizes rate of change rather than time, and is thus more compatible with a young earth. Catastrophic events such as the Genesis Flood are called upon to explain major features of geologic history. Recent catastrophies like the Mt. St. Helens volcanic eruption do support Catastrophism to some degree, in that we have now observed surprisingly great geologic changes in a short period of time.

It is becoming more and more apparent that the Uniformitarian doctrine was pushed too far, and now Catastrophism must be given a place at the table. Even with that said, I still can't compress geologic history into a few thousand years, and I accept the appearance of age to be representative of genuine age.

Just a brief mention here about the origin of man. The theory of evolution by natural selection of random mutations (Darwinism) is nonsense suitable only to hide from the truth of God's legitimate authority as Creator. It rose to dominance in the latter half of the 19th Century, not because of its scientific virtue, but because it divides humanity into the greater and lesser 'evolved'; it justified European colonialism, and class stratification, upholding the old elite claim to superior 'blood and breeding'. It was a powerful counter to the growing Christian egalitarianism of the American Revolution.

I believe in the special creation of mankind as God's highest creation, but I see no theologically substantive difference between special creation in an instant, and the God directed evolution of the human genome. We no more 'descended' from apes than a Thunderbird descended from a Model T. Only the design evolved, each was a special creation. That, of course, goes for all the other 'kinds' of the living

creation which arrive in the fossil record abruptly and perfectly adapted to their environments—as if by design.

If we concede that God uses time consuming processes to accomplish His will, then I can imagine the development of the human genome as a logical process of building upon, by divine intervention, the developing genetic code according to His design. I am not wedded to that idea, but until some better explanation comes along it suits me.

So here we have, at least to my mind, a Biblical justification for an old earth: time was needed for the accomplishment of God's purpose. I don't know how old earth is, but certainly much older than a few thousand years. I doubt the precise accuracy of some of the old earth models. The Young Earthers have pointed out many problems with the models, and many of the "constants" I was taught, like atomic decay rates, and the speed of light, are being found not to be so constant after all. So I will remain an agnostic on the age of the earth, and I find that no problem at all either in my faith or my life.

8. Finally, I want to return briefly to the serious implications of those issues entangled with the age of the earth, and the veracity of the Biblical creation account. I alluded earlier to the age of the earth being at issue in the Reformation Period, and becoming so again in the mid-Nineteenth Century. The Protestant Reformation and the Copernican Revolution (proposing a heliocentric rather than a geocentric solar system) were contemporary issues. The Church had been so influenced by Greek philosophers as to have wrongly accepted the Ptolemaic idea of a geocentric solar system as 'gospel'. During the wars of the Reformation between Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist states, no one wanted to be seen as soft on doctrine, and on these two points (because of their irrelevance to the issues at stake) they could agree: a geocentric solar system, and a 'literal' six day creation and young earth. It was then that some creeds and confessions adopted the 'literal' view of creation days.

The issue of the nature of the solar system was settled, and the issue of the age of the earth declined into a matter of obscure scholarly debate; until the rise of Darwinism in the mid-nineteenth Century. Darwinist Evolutionary ideology threatened to overthrow the entirety of western Christian civilization, but Darwinism required vast amounts of time for its support. So the age of the earth and 'literal' days became issues again, and weapons against the barbarian hordes of Darwinism.

Today we are faced with the question: What are we as human beings? Are we as the Darwinist/Naturalists believe simply transient flukes of random mutations in an eternally existent, but mindless, loveless, pointless cosmos? What would that mean to us?

I have thought a great deal about that and written about it in other venues. The following quote is from my website warcomestogodshouse.com. It recounts the opinion of a supposedly great 'scientist', and certain enemy of Christianity:

I want to take just a brief look at what a new edition hails as
“THE SEMINAL WORK OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY ON ITS 75TH
ANNIVERSARY...” (Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its
Discontents*, frontispiece). I am sad to say there is some truth to that

boast, such ideals precede Freud however. Let us pick out only two parts of this remarkable work.

First, Freud's rejection of the traditional family relationship, which I will pass over with the brief quote: "*Only the weaklings have submitted to such an extensive encroachment upon their sexual freedom...*" (Freud p-95). That hardly needs explanation, but perhaps a moment of reflection might be in order on what that philosophy means to the principal building block of society – the family.

Of the second, we will take only a somewhat longer look. This is Freud's judgment on the Biblical injunction, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*". Freud did a lengthy introspective discussion of this concept and found it to be an impossible demand, as impossible as "*Love thy enemy*" – for it was ultimately the same thing. Man's only possible relationship, by nature, is enemy. To men, as Freud saw it, "*...their neighbor is for them not only a potential helper or sex object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and kill him. Homo homino lupus*" (i.e. Man is a wolf to man). (Freud, p-104)

This description of the nature of man could have been penned by an old-time Lutheran preacher. But with them, such a nature is the result of the fall, not biological determinism, and men are redeemable and able through spiritual renewal to overcome their depraved natures. Not so in Freud's view. It was, in Freud's opinion, the attempt to follow such biologically absurd precepts as 'Love thy neighbor' that lead men to the mental anguish, psychoses, and insanity modern man suffers. Furthermore, "*...anyone who follows such a precept in present-day civilization only puts himself at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the person who disregards it.*" (Freud, p-151)

Freud is right, of course, in his analysis of "natural man". The ability to love your fellow man, even your enemy, comes from the old time religion. When one believes, really believes in the power and promises of God, then the envy, lust, fear and anger that breed hatred fade into insignificance. Faith, hope, and love ("charity" in the KJV) are the important things St. Paul advises us, and the greatest of these is love. I would add, the culmination of these is love. Faith gives us hope of joy beyond our wildest imagination. That hope frees us for love. Freud never discovered that.

Freud is much more complicated than pictured here, but this is an accurate tally of his bottom line on the nature (the biologically determined character) of man. What constraints are placed upon this rapacious nature are for the practical necessity of forming a community only, not for the sake of following some received moral code.

Are we simply soulless, biologically determined higher primates, or is there more to us? Thomas Jefferson and his revolutionary friends thought more of us when he penned:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ...

Jefferson returned to that theme a half century later in a letter to Thomas Weightman on the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence with this assertion that the time was at hand when it would be universally accepted that: *"...the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately..."*.

Jefferson's revolutionary vision stunned the old world, ruled as it was by an hereditary aristocracy who, alone, enjoyed rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It quickly led to the downfall of that old world order, at least partially, and publicly. This dream of Jefferson's was not his alone, of course, but the culmination of a new world view born and nourished in the Reformation and English Civil War. Unfortunately that hope was betrayed; even now the world, including America, is caught up in a counter-revolution. Many government rulers covertly hold to the ideal that "Man is a wolf to man", and that is natural and right. America itself is sliding farther and faster in that direction, to the "Left", the anti-God 'Left'.

The opposite of socialism, communism, progressivism and other 'isms' that can be grouped as 'Left' is the idea of God endowed 'natural rights'. The truth, as opposed to the illusion of all these Leftist systems, is total control of the masses by government, and total control of government by an elite few. You may be certain that these modern 'booted and spurred' few hate the Biblical view of mankind, as they hate even the provisions God made for the growth of humanity, fossil fuels for instance. For this reason, as well as deeper spiritual reasons, the truth of Biblical Creation is worth fighting for; but, as I said before, six literal creation days is 'not the hill to die on'. It should be taken off the table as a weapon against Godlessness, and a wedge among Christians. Those who fear God but reject His salvation will continue to hide behind some fig leaf fantasy even if convinced the earth was only six thousand years old.

Thanks for your time, I hope it wasn't wasted.

Bill