



THE DANGERS OF THE YOUNG EARTH MOVEMENT



I had a Christian say to me one time, "What difference does it make whether you believe in an old earth or a young earth? It doesn't affect our salvation one bit." That's true. But what we believe is seen by the unsaved. When we proclaim our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ to get to heaven, everything else we believe in is put into play. If we are a wild conspiracy theorist, our opinion about other subjects lose some credibility. If we tell people that we have been abducted by aliens, no one will believe what we say.

When it comes to the argument whether the earth we live on is 6000 years or millions of years old, one side of the argument is wrong. This isn't a case where both sides of the argument are somehow correct. The earth is either 6000 years old or the earth is millions of years old. The argument has become so polarized that friendships have been lost. And Young Earth Creationists have lost a great deal of credibility with the secular world.

During my career as a police officer, I was assigned to the detective bureau and placed in charge of the Juvenile Crime Unit. I worked with parents of out-of-control children and soon discovered that one of the hurdles parents encountered in disciplining their children was interference into their family lives by child abuse investigators from the Department of Children's Services. Threats of prosecution by social workers against parents for simply disciplining their children caused many parents to eliminate old-fashioned time-tested disciplinary methods like spanking. I began encouraging parents to take control of their children and to ignore the illegal intrusions into their affairs by Social Services.



At the same time I was appearing as a speaker at home schooling conventions, there was another organization that was becoming popular with the home educators. Ken Ham from the organization "Answers In Genesis" began showing up as a keynote speaker at the same conventions I was attending. I sat in on some of the lectures given by Ken Ham and listened to his theory that the earth

we live on is only 6000 years old and that that dinosaurs existed on earth alongside man. Ken Ham told his audience that any scientific evidence that the universe was millions of years old had been falsified by scientists. Ken Ham also implied that if you didn't believe his theory, then you believed in evolution and "undermined the very gospel" of the Holy Bible. As I listened to Ken Ham change the words in the scriptures in order for the Bible text to fit the Young Earth theory, I looked around the audience and observed people nodding their heads in approval. They had absolutely no idea that they were being given false information. Not one of them were checking their Bibles to see if Ken Ham was reading the text correctly!

I have never believed in evolution, and I believe in the six literal day account of our beginnings in the book of Genesis. But I also believe that the earth is much older than 6000 years. I have never had any trouble marrying the two ideas because I believe the Bible unequivocally gives us the evidence that supports those facts. I also feel extremely comfortable being included in a group of extremely learned Bible scholars who believe as I do. From 19th century Theologians Charles Hodge and Cyrus Scofield, to modern day Christians like John Ankerberg, Chuck Colson, and Walter Kaiser. Well respected men from the Assemblies, like William Warke, Archie Stewart, William Furguson, and Oswald MacCleod. There are instances where Young Earth Creationist leaders actually belittle these Godly men. It is the height of arrogance for anyone to call these men "fools," but the staff at Answers In Genesis has no problem doing so.

Because I have always thought that most people retain more information by watching a video than reading text, I developed a web site named BiblicalBackup.com. The site deals with controversial Bible subjects, one of which was the Young Earth, Old Earth controversy.

I began emailing links to the home educators email list each time I added a segment to the site. It soon became obvious that most were not happy with my criticism of the Young Earth theory. One woman wrote to me saying, "I always considered you an intelligent person. I have now changed my mind." I was accused of not being a true Christian. People asked me to remove them from my email list. One home educating parent stated, "Never contact me again." I was stunned by the reaction of the Lord's people simply because I believed in an old earth. I began researching the reasons for this reaction, and it didn't take me long to figure it out. Young Earth organizations, like Answers In Genesis and the Institute For Creation Research, are teaching their followers that anyone who believes that the earth is millions of years old is a heretic, and probably not a Christian at all. If the old-earthers are genuine Christians, they are a severely misguided ones.

Most members of the Young Earth Creation movement are very vocal about any opposition to their theory that the universe we live in is only 6000 years old. Ken Ham is probably the most vocal in proclaiming that if you believe in millions of years, you can't be a true Christian.

Here are some quotes by Ken Ham during his lectures at Answers In Genesis.

"As soon as you believe in millions of years, you've undermined the entire gospel."

"If you as a Christian accept that [millions of years], you have a major problem."

"If we believe millions of years, it destroys the whole basis for the gospel."

"When you believe in the millions years, you undermine the whole authority of the Word of God."

"We need to grasp hold of the fact, that as soon as we believe in millions of years, as Christians, and so many do, not only do we destroy the gospel, we destroy the whole teachings of the new heavens and new earth."

"There are many Christian leaders today that try to believe in the millions of years and try to cling to the conservative evangelical message of Christianity and the New Testament, but that's inconsistent, you can't do that ultimately."

"Sadly, today in the church, there are so many Christians that say you can believe in millions of years, you can somehow add these ideas to the Bible, but as soon as you do that, you destroy a literal Genesis, you destroy the foundation of all of our Christian doctrine."

"You know what we see happening today? Humanism is taking over our nations in the west. It's taking over the churches, it's taking over people's lives. Do you know why? Because once you knock out that foundation, the foundation of God's word, you do that by destroying the foundational book of Genesis, the structure collapses."

"People say, well OK, if this is so, then why does the majority of people believe it? Why do the majority of scientists believe it? That's a good question. But the Bible tells us the answer. 2nd Peter 3, in talking about the flood in Noah's day, in verse five, we read this 'For this they willingly are ignorant of,' some translations say 'choose to disbelieve.' In other words, it has nothing to do with the evidence, they don't want to believe. You know, we've got to remember, the Bible tells us there's more on the broad way than the narrow way, men love darkness rather than light, so really, when it comes to spiritual things like this, when it comes to God's word, wouldn't we expect that the majority wouldn't agree with us?"

Ken Ham goes as far to say that the increase in school shootings all across our country has been caused by a belief in an old earth. To make this kind of statement by a leader who has so much influence over his flock is totally irresponsible.

Others on Ham's staff, like Dr. Terry Mortenson, have made a career lecturing around the country and selling their products.

Mortenson has written numerous books which he sells to his followers that promote his theory that any Christian that believes in an old earth is seriously misled. Mortenson doesn't go as far to

say the old-earthers are not Christians, they are just confused. Here are some of the statements he has made during his lectures regarding the belief that the earth is millions of years old.



"If the geologists have been brainwashed, then all of us lay people have been brainwashed, and that also means that all of our Bible scholars and theologians have been brainwashed."

"You know a lot of Christians believe in millions of years, but I submit to you that that is absolutely contradictory to what the Bible says."

"How many of you have heard of The Fundamentals? These volumes were defending the fundamentals of the Christian faith in the onslaught of liberal theology. These articles are defending the deity of Christ, the virgin birth of Christ, the inherency of Scripture, the inspiration of Scripture, miracles, and on and on. It's great reading, except for the four chapters on science. Those four articles were written by compromised Christians. They all accepted the idea of millions of years."

"I want to read to you now an email that I got from one of the leading evangelical theologians just a few weeks ago. He said this, 'Hundreds and hundreds of competent biblical interpreters hold to an old earth and don't deny inerrancy.' This illustrates to me where we're at, especially in evangelical theological circles, and academia, and it's something that just grieves my heart. Hundreds and hundreds of competent Biblical scholars are wrong!"



Dr. Jason Lisle is one of the younger speakers for Answers In Genesis. He is another of the so called Creation Scientists that is sent around the world to lecture on creationism as a part of Christian apologetics.

He has a Ph.D. in solar astrophysics, and uses certain scientific facts to convince the audience that the earth is 6000 years old. After one of his lectures, he was asked by a critic what scientific evidence would make him change his mind, to which he replied, "none would." This attitude is certainly acceptable in the religious arena, but in the scientific community, Jason Lisle would not be considered a scientist. He promotes any scientific evidence that agrees with a young earth, but disputes any like evidence that indicates our universe is millions of years old. His credentials are used solely to add weight to his one sided viewpoint of the debate.

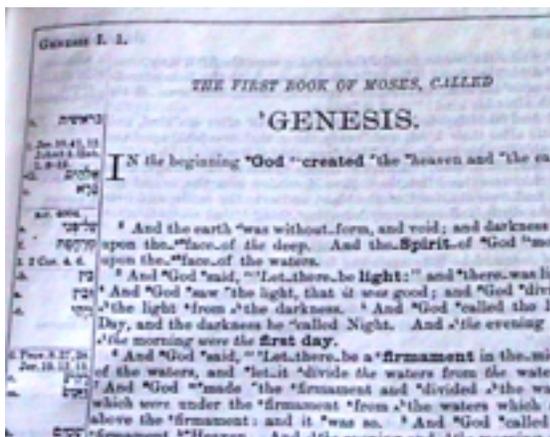
Jason Lisle also convinces his audience that anyone who does not believe in a Young Earth is a "fool." Young Earth followers are taught that people who believe that the earth and universe are millions of years old do not use the intelligence given to them by God. They are encouraged not to debate with Old Earth believers, a which explains why they refuse to discuss the subject at all with old-earthers. Jason encourages the audience if they are forced into a discussion with an old-earthier, to have their important talking points prepared so they can "slice and dice" their opponent.

I have not heard much from the Old Earth crowd in response to the YECs accusations. I believe that's because those who believe in an old earth and universe are relatively comfortable with their position and have no reason to hold seminars and publish hundreds of books proclaiming their views. I believe its time to rethink this strategy. A false doctrine, undisputed by those with a greater knowledge of Biblical truths, can spread like a cancer. The Young Earth publicity is harming Christianity, and there needs to be more of the opposing viewpoint heard by the secular world.

Another area of deceit used by Ken Ham is his insistence that the Old Earth Doctrine was somehow cooked up by certain Christian scientists who wanted to dispute Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and needed millions of years to fit into the Bible. Ken Ham actually has it backwards. Contrary to the YEC's claim that the young earth theory was "the dominant view up until the beginning of the nineteenth century," there is little evidence to support that claim. The concept of a young earth really emerged in 1961, when Henry Morris and John Whitcomb Jr. wrote their book, "The Genesis Flood," which was based on the philosophy of the Seventh Day Adventist, George McCready Price, during the 1930s. In this book, the theory that the entire universe was approximately 6000 years old was born.

The Old Earth position can be traced as far back as the late 1500s in the writings of the Dutchman Episcopius, and was expounded upon by Thomas Chalmers in one of his lectures in 1814. Ken Ham has accused Chalmers of promoting the idea that the earth is millions of years old to accommodate the secular science view of evolution, but Charles Darwin did not publish his theory, "On The Origin Of The Species"

until 1859. Thomas Chalmers could not have been trying to "fit the Bible into science," simply because the theory of evolution had not yet been introduced. Christian geologists, like William Buckland, published gap writings in 1820, and Hugh Miller in 1857 also wrote about a gap of time in Geneses chapter one in his book, "Testimony Of The Rocks." Cyrus Scofield, who published his study Bible in the early 1900s, actually placed a space, or "gap," between verse



one and verse two of Genesis chapter one, denoting a space of time between the two verses.

People who support the old earth idea believe that the scientific evidence showing the age of the universe as much older than 6000 years can be substantiated by the Scriptures, and placing a gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 does not in any way damage the Word of God.

Young Earthers on the other hand, preach that there is a world wide conspiracy in astronomy and geology to cover up the evidence that the earth is only 6000 years old, and that geologists use deceit in their methods of determining dates simply so they don't have to acknowledge that there is a God.

But Ken Ham cannot explain the thousands of born again Christian scientists who believe in the infallible Word of God, believe in the literal account of six days in Genesis chapter one, and also believe that the universe is millions of year old. Ham continues to imply that these experts are perhaps "not real Christians," and are "undermining the gospel of Jesus Christ." A great deal of intolerance exists with the Young Earth Creationists.

I believe that Young Earthers pose a real danger to the message of true Christianity. YECs are blind to the fact that their belief in the theory that our earth is only 6000 years old and that dinosaurs lived alongside man during our early history, makes them look like "flat earthers" to the secular world. The non-Christian is fed a theory by YECs that undermines the whole meaning of truth, and at the same time is handed what appears to be a good reason to reject the good news of Jesus Christ.

How can someone listen seriously to a young earther preaching salvation through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, when that same person preaches an unbelievable theory about the age of the universe. It's like watching a female tele-evangelist with purple hair, tons of makeup, and earrings the size of hubcaps, crying crocodile tears and asking you to send more money to their ministry while preaching the gospel.

One day, while flipping through the channels on the TV with a non-Christian friend in the room, we came upon Ken Ham with his program Answers In Genesis. My friend immediately stated, "That guy's a kook!" He went on to explain to me that he had watched a portion of one of Ham's television programs, and had "switched the channel" when Ham began talking about dinosaurs and man coexisting on earth and dinosaurs being taken into Noah's ark. This is a non-Christian who believes in the story of Noah!

I was hoping that my friend did not hear Ken Ham preaching the gospel, which he does quite well, because his belief in a young earth would severely undermine any witnessing about the gospel I had done so far with my friend. I made it a point to agree with my friend that Ham was "a kook." Because when Ken Ham, and others like him, completely deny any and all physical evidence that the earth is millions of years old, it completely destroys any other message they have to the secular world. They accuse old earthers of undermining the gospel, when it is the

YECs that are destroying any credibility they have with the unsaved. Their witness for Christ is seriously undermined to those who have any scientific knowledge.

I was standing with a group of unsaved people at a company function and the conversation turned to the subject of heaven and hell. One of the men in the group, knowing my background, asked me, "What's your opinion on how a person gets to heaven?" Before I could open my mouth, another person in the group blurted, "You're not one of those nuts who believes the earth is only six thousand years old, are you?" After I assured him I believed the earth and the universe was billions of years old, he replied, "Good. At least your not a nut." I was then able to convey the message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. I truly believe that if I had professed to be a Young Earth Creationist, everything that I said would have held much less credibility with that group.

YECs also pose a danger within the Christian community. I am amazed at how quickly Christians are deceived into believing the theories being preached by Ken Ham and others in the YEC movement. But there is a danger that when the fallacies of the young earth theories are finally discovered, disillusioned Christians become confused, and may question their own faith. It can affect the core of their life. A Christian who has believed their entire life that the earth is young, and then comes to a realization that the earth is old, might consider the theory of evolution as true. Does this mean that the Bible was wrong, and perhaps their entire belief in the Bible misplaced?

What about the children of young earthers who have been taught about a young earth from an early age, and then go to college and study geology or astronomy? Whether those children are saved or unsaved, they are now faced with credible evidence that our universe is millions of years old, and everything their parents taught them about the Bible is now shrouded with serious doubt. There are many false doctrines out there, but the Young Earth theory is a dangerous one for Christians to be teaching their children.

What most creationists do not understand, is that science does not explain away the universe in the absence of God. We need to utilize the brains God gave us and use them to understand the universe. Psalms 8:3 says, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou are mindful of him?" The original Hebrew word for "consider" is "ra'ah." It means to "learn about" or to "find out." To completely ignore modern science is not Biblical. God gave us the intelligence to "learn about" and "find out" about our universe and our earth. Good science has consistently substantiated God's Word. There is overwhelming evidence in our earth and the heavens that our universe is more than 6000 years old. Placing a gap of millions of years between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 does not damage the Word of God! We just have to look at the evidence.