

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About . . . Creating the Heavens and the Earth

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light; and there was light.' God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day" (Genesis 1:1-5). According to the next 25 verses God continued to exert His creative power over a period of 6 days, culminating in the creation of man on the sixth day (Gen. 1:6-31). Following the 6 days of creation we are told that God rested from His work on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1-2).

Modern science teaches that the earth is actually billions of years old, and that the appearance of man was the result of an evolutionary process that has taken place over a period of several billion years. To refute this modern-day idea of creation, we must understand what the word "day" means in God's word. The Bible says the completion of the physical universe took place within a period known as "the first day." But how long was the first day? The text says, "And there was evening and there was morning, one day." The Biblical text defines the word "day" to mean a literal 24-hour day. Therefore, there is no room in the text for a day to last millions of years between the first and second "day".

Many Christians try to harmonize the creation with the claims of science by saying that there were millions of years between each day of the creation rather than literal six 24-hour days. The scientific theory of evolution and the Christian who tries to conform to millions of years between each day, will fail when we understand the third day of the creation. "The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them after their kind." If the sun was not created until day four, how would plants survive for millions of years before the sun existed?! See Genesis 1:12-15.

If the Biblical account of the creation is not to be taken literally, then what other passages of scripture could we re-define? Are we free to manipulate Biblical accounts of other events in order to conform to modern science? What about the virgin birth of Christ (Matt. 1:18-25)? Since modern science rejects the possibility of such a miracle, should Christians theorize a way in which to harmonize it with science? What about the resurrection of Christ (Matt. 28:1-6)? Should we interpret this great event in a way to align it with modern science?

Paul wrote, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). However, many weak Christians seem to have the idea that faith comes from hearing the claims of science and then running to the Bible and interpreting it to harmonize with those claims. Paul warned against this lack of faith when he wrote, "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called 'knowledge' which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith" (1 Timothy 6:20-21).

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). There was no human being alive in the first 5 literal days of creation. Only "by faith we can understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Hebrews 11:3,6). "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they [mankind] are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

Send comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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