

Brazil 2015

Principles Conference

IN THE BEGINNING: CREATION AND BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

Session 1: “Creation Outside Genesis: The Biblical Testimony”

Introduction

- The rest of Scripture (outside Genesis 1) supports the historical record of creation as recorded in Genesis 1.
- Deuteronomy 32:8, Job 31:33, and 1 Chronicles 1:1 may all refer to Adam by name.
- Jesus refers to events in Genesis 1–7 fifteen times.
- At least 100 references to events in Genesis 1–11 in the NT (only 9 direct quotes).
- Spiritual authority comprises the core issue: we must accept either the authority of the Lord and His written revelation or the authority of the church and its “infallible pope(s)” or the authority of human reason with its self-styled sovereignty.
 - “I fear that I will be laughed at by those who have scientific knowledge of these matters and by those who recognize the facts of the case.”— Augustine (A.D. 387–430), *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, 1.10 (FC 41.30)—*City of God*, 11.7
- The last events in Scripture repeat in inverse order the first events in Scripture—providing a unified structure for Scripture with a single witness to Creation and to Christ.

I. The Panorama of Scripture

- A. There are at least 100 references to the events of Genesis 1–11 in the New Testament alone.
- B. Denial of the creation account in Genesis 1–2 places in question all of Scripture’s teachings.
- C. Some of the Old Testament references:
 - Genesis 9:1, 6, 7
 - Exodus 20:8–11
 - Deuteronomy 4:32; 32:8
 - 1 Chronicles 1:1; 16:26
 - Nehemiah 9:6
 - Job 9:8; 31:33; 38:1–41:34 (esp. 38:4, 12, 32–33; 40:14)
 - Psalms 8; 89:11–12, 47; 104:2–5, 24; 148:4–5
 - Proverbs 3:18; 11:30; 13:12
 - Ecclesiastes 3:20; 7:20, 29; 12:1, 7
 - Isaiah 40:26, 28; 42:5, 12, 18
 - Hosea 6:7
 - Amos 4:13

- Malachi 2:10

D. Some of the New Testament references:

- Matthew 25:34
- Mark 10:6
- Luke 3:38
- John 1:1–5, 9, 10
- Acts 14:15; 17:24–26
- Romans 1:20, 25; 5:14
- 1 Corinthians 8:6; 15:22, 45
- 2 Corinthians 4:6
- Colossians 1:13–16
- 1 Timothy 2:13–14
- 1 Peter 1:20
- Revelation 4:11; 13:8

E. If it really took millions or billions of years to create the first heavens and earth, how long will we have to wait for the new heavens and the new earth (Isaiah 65:17)?

II. The Structure of Scripture

A. The last things in Scripture recapitulate in inverse order the first things in Scripture.

Genesis 1:1—Creation
 Genesis 1:3—God’s Light
 Genesis 1:26—Man’s Rule
 Genesis 2:8–17—Old Eden
Genesis 3:17—Curse
Revelation 21:4; 22:3—No Curse
 Revelation 22:1–2—New Eden
 Revelation 20:4—Man’s Rule
 Revelation 21:23; 22:5—God’s Light
 Revelation 21:1—New Creation

Genesis 1:1—Creation
 Genesis 3:1—Satan’s Freedom
 Genesis 6–8—Worldwide Judgment
Genesis 10–11—Babel/Babylon
Revelation 17–18—Babylon
 Revelation 19:11–19—Worldwide Judgment
 Revelation 20:2–3—Satan’s Confinement
 Revelation 21:1—New Creation



“Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus
is the spirit of prophecy.”
Revelation 19:10

- B.** Denial of the Creator is inexcusable, according to the Scriptures.
- C.** Denial of biblical creation exchanges God’s truth for man’s lie.
- D.** Denial of biblical creation results in greater depravity and immorality due to the rejection of the Creator’s authority and His inerrant revelation.
- E.** Putting in question the doctrine of first things (protology) endangers the doctrine of last things (eschatology).
- F.** Without historical, temporal Creation there is no hope for a historical, temporal Restoration.
- G.** The alternative, secular historical science, changes—Scripture does not change.

Conclusion

When we affirm biblical creationism,

- ✓ we propose the plain sense of the rest of Scripture;
- ✓ we provide foundational truths for basic Christian doctrine; and
- ✓ we preserve the salvific focus of the Christian faith—only the Creator can ultimately save and restore.

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Session 2: “The Creation Record: Is It Poetry?”

Introduction

- Genesis 1 is a literary masterpiece.
- Genesis 1 is a literal historical account of creation.
- Genesis 1 is a theological foundation for all of Scripture.

I. Genesis 1 is not poetry.

- A. Genesis 1 lacks the parallelism of Hebrew poetry.
 - Compare Psalm 104:2-4
- B. Genesis 1 lacks the grammar of Hebrew poetry.
 - Limited use of “the” in Hebrew poetry.
 - Limited use of “which” in Hebrew poetry.
 - Limited use of sequential narrative verb forms in Hebrew poetry.
- C. Genesis 1 lacks the imagery and metaphor of Hebrew poetry.
 - Compare Psalm 104:2 – 7

II. Genesis 1 is historical narrative.

- A. Peter Enns: “narrative is not an automatic indication of historical veracity, either in the Bible or any other literature, ancient or modern.” — *Evolution of Adam*, 53
 - Narrative prose without historical veracity: fiction.
 - ✓ Compare Exodus 15 (“the Song of Moses”)
 - ✓ Compare Judges 5 (“the Song of Deborah”)
 - ✓ Compare Psalm 105
- B. Genesis 1 presents a narrative with chronological sequence.
 - Seven days
 - Days 1 through 6 defined as possessing “evening” and “morning.”
 - Progressive development of the creation in chronological order (e.g., land before plants, plants before animals, etc.).
- C. Genesis 1 contains formulaic repetitions.
 - “God said”
 - God’s speech/command
 - Result
 - God’s work
 - Naming

- God's view
 - Day identification
- D.** Genesis 1 is close to the form of a genealogy.
- See Genesis 2:4 and 5:1.
- III.** Don't misunderstand the significance of Genesis 1.
- A.** The supernatural nature of the record.
 - B.** The reality of creation.
 - C.** The historical testimony of the Scriptures.
 - D.** The chronological data contained in the creation account.
 - E.** The pattern of biblical history beginning in Genesis 1.

Conclusion

- There were six literal days for the creation of the heavens, the earth, the seas, and all that they contain (see Exodus 20:8-11).
- The Genesis record sets precedents regarding how we should view and understand God and His work.
- We must maintain faith in the unity of the biblical record from Genesis through Revelation.

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Session 3: “The Historicity of Adam and Eve”

Introduction

The importance of the topic:

- Was Adam the first of the human race?
- Or, was he just the head of a clan, tribe, or nation?
- Or, does the Bible present him as merely a representative of man generally speaking?
- Or, was Adam the product of biological evolution?
- Or, did he ever really exist?

Our affirmation:

- Adam was a historical person and the originating head of the entire human race.

A historical Adam is foundational to a biblical understanding of

- God’s creative activity
- The history of the human race
- The nature of mankind
- The origin and nature of sin
- The existence and nature of death
- The necessity for and the reality of salvation from sin
- The historicity of events in the book of Genesis
- The inspiration, authority, and inerrancy of Scripture

I. The Secular Alternative to a Historical Adam

A. Biological evolution

B. An old universe and an old earth—billions of years old

C. The biblical writers possessed a pre-scientific viewpoint of existence.

- Flat earth?
- Earth floating on the sea?
- Solid sky?
- 3-storey earth?
- Response:
 - ✓ Genesis 4:20—agriculture and domestic livestock
 - ✓ Genesis 4:21—musical instruments and musical composition
 - ✓ Genesis 4:22—iron working (metallurgy)

- ✓ The 3-storey universe is a metaphorical description, which the biblical writers and people of their time and culture understood as merely metaphorical. See Job 9:6 and 26:7, 11. Compare “windows” in the sky (Genesis 7:11 vs. 2 Kings 7:2, “if Yahweh should make windows in heaven, could this thing be?”).
- ✓ The biblical writers hold a different world view from the pagan cultures surrounding them.
- ✓ The Ancient Near Eastern literary descriptions of creation display no uniform testimony.

II. The Biblical Evidence

A. Genesis 1:1-25

- Orderly progression of 6 days
- Universal focus
- God-centered
- Preparation of the earth for life

B. Genesis 1:26-2:3

- First person plural pronoun (1:26)
- Male and female
- Divine mandate to multiply

C. Genesis 2:4-24

- Single individual formed (2:7)
- “breath of life” (2:7)
- A “living soul/being” (2:7)
- God places him in a garden (2:8)
- God assigns work for him (2:15)
- God’s command (2:16–17)
- “alone” is “not good” (2:18)
- An appropriate counterpart (2:18)
- None found among the animals (2:19-20)
- Context of naming (2:20)
- From one individual’s side (2:21)
- One woman (2:22)
- Her relationship to the man (2:23)
- One man + one woman (2:24-25)
- Compare 3:1, 4, 6, 7, etc.

D. Genesis 3

- Heritage of pain, toil, and death
- Expulsion from the garden
- “very good” (1:31) is no longer true
- First Gospel—3:15
- “you”—singular and masculine—throughout the chapter—Adam’s responsibility

- E.** Genesis 4–11
 - Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)
 - Adam and Noah (Genesis 5)
 - The global, catastrophic Flood (Genesis 6–9)
 - The tower of Babel (Genesis 10–11)
- F.** Remainder of the Old Testament
 - Exodus 20:11
 - Deuteronomy 4:32
 - Isaiah 42:5
 - Ezekiel 28:11-19
 - Malachi 2:15
 - 1 Chronicles 1:1
- G.** In the New Testament
 - Matthew 1:1 // Genesis 5:1
 - Luke 3:38
 - Acts 17:26
 - Romans 5:12-21
 - 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49

III. Theological Significance

- A.** The biblical description of sin depends upon the historicity of Adam.
- B.** The historicity of Adam has a bearing on the historicity of Christ, the Second Adam.
- C.** The historicity of Adam is a gospel issue.
- D.** Denial of Adam’s historicity, like denial of the historicity of Christ’s resurrection, destroys the foundations of the Christian faith.
 - Peter Enns: “evolution requires us to revisit how the Bible thinks of human origins.”
 - The Bible requires that we rethink evolution.
 - Isaiah 40:8

IV. Significance of Ancient Near Eastern Literature

- A.** Too many scholars over-emphasize similarities between the biblical creation account and the Ancient Near Eastern accounts.
 - Polytheism vs. monotheism
 - Physical images of gods vs. against idol worship
 - Eternal matter vs. eternal Spirit
 - Low view of gods vs. high view of God
 - Low view of humanity vs. high view of humanity
 - Everlasting conflict vs. no conflict at creation
 - Lack of a uniform standard of ethics vs. expectation of obedience to a uniform standard of ethics

B. What accounts for any similarities?

- Shared memory of actual events
- Shared memory of a singular revelation
- Fallen mankind skews the memory
- Accepting extrabiblical evidence over the biblical record denigrates the Scriptures.

Conclusion

“We need to defend the teaching of the text, not a scientific reconstruction of the text or statements that are read between the lines of the text.”

— John Walton, *Genesis*, NIVAC, 100

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Session 4: “Creation and Fall: The Problem of Death”

Introduction

When did death enter the creation?

- Millions and billions of years requires presence of death longer than the Bible reveals.
- Fossils provide evidence of death.
 - ✓ Geological column is not a record of life zones, but of death and burial zones.
- Genesis 1:31—“God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.”

If evolutionary science is correct, then God’s “very good” creation before the Fall was a much worse place to live than the post-Fall world under God’s curse.

The Epistle to the Romans

- I. Introduction (1:1-17)
 - II. The Need for Righteous because of Universal Sin (1:18-3:20)
 - III. The Righteousness of God in Justification by Faith (3:21-5:21)
 - A. The Constitution of Christian Faith (3:21-26)
 - B. The Corollaries (3:27-31)
 - C. The Confirmation from Scripture (4:1-25)
 - D. The Constancy of Justification by Faith (5:1-11)
 - E. The Cause for Justification by Faith (5:12-21)
- I.** The cause for death among human beings involves the headship of Adam, the head of the human race. (5:12-21)
- A.** Consideration of Headship (vv. 12-14)
 1. Universal result: death (vv. 12-14a)
 - Disobedience results in the entrance of death (Genesis 2:17).
 - Refers to both physical and spiritual death.
 - See Genesis 3:19, 22.
 2. Headship of Adam as a type of Christ (v. 14b)
 - B.** Contrasts of Headship (vv. 15-17)
 1. Different in quality (v. 15)
 2. Different in operation (v. 16)
 3. Different in consequences: death vs. life (v. 17)
 - God extends His mercy.

- ✓ Immediate physical death would have put an end to God's program for Adam and Eve.
- ✓ God allows the pair to continue living so that they might produce offspring ("seed") that eventually will triumph over the serpent.
 - Without that extension, the Restorer cannot come.
 - Without that extension, no remedy can be applied.
 - All that God did in Genesis 3 has an eschatological end in mind.
 - Compare with God's actions in Exodus 32:1–34:28.
 - Death in Genesis 2–3 = alienation from the life of God, which replaces freedom and innocence with shame and fear.

C. Consequences of Headship (vv. 18-21)

1. Similar in scope: for all (v. 18)
2. Similar in operation: by one (v. 19)
3. Similar in measure: dominance (vv. 20-21)

D. Implications

If human death did not begin with Adam:

- The apostle Paul's theology has no certain foundation.
- Scripture is in error.
- The Fall did not take place.
- The descendants of Adam are not sinners.
- Christ did not need to give His life.
- Christ is not Savior.
- The grace of God has no power.

II. The cause for death among living things involves the Fall of Adam in his disobedience to God.

A. The Old Testament testifies to the fact that non-human creation has experienced the effects of human sin.

- Genesis 8:21
- Deuteronomy 28:15-45
- Jonah 4:11

B. All of creation currently finds itself subject to futility and corruption as a result of God's curse on the creation in Genesis 3.

- Romans 8:19-23

III. Christ came to redeem both mankind and all creation, in order to restore the creation.

- Acts 3:21
- Romans 8:19-23
- Colossians 1:15-20
- Revelation 21:3-5; 22:3

IV. Acceptance of death and disease over millions of years impugns the very character of God.

“What kind of God can one infer from the sort of phenomena epitomized by the species on Darwin’s Galapagos Islands? The evolutionary process is rife with happenstance, contingency, incredible waste, death, pain and horror. . . . The God of the Galapagos is careless, wasteful, indifferent, almost diabolical. He is certainly not the sort of God to whom anyone would be inclined to pray.” — David Hull (1992)

- Exodus 23:12
- Deuteronomy 25:4
- Proverbs 12:10
- Jonah 4:11
- Matthew 6:23
- Matthew 12:11-12

Conclusion

- ✓ The age of the earth matters.
- ✓ Accepting the theory of evolution has severe implications.
- ✓ Death before the Fall impugns the character of God.
- ✓ Christ came and died for our sins in order to redeem His creation.

What difference do the God of goodness
and the Christ of grace
make to you and what you believe
about creation, Fall, and restoration?

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Session 5: “Noah’s Flood: Global and Catastrophic or Local and Gradual?”

Introduction

“Science is not in the position to dictate what claims the text may or may not make. Scientists can offer suggestions or raise objections, and these can be appreciated, but these must be evaluated in light of the statements that the text makes—such is the evangelical commitment.” — John Walton, *Genesis*, NIVAC, 321

- What was the extent of the biblical Flood?
- What was the nature of the biblical Flood:

I. Noah’s Flood Was Global in Extent

A. The Biblical Evidence

- Genesis 6:5-7, God’s intent
- Genesis 6:7, even the birds were destroyed.
- Genesis 6:13, “the end of all flesh”
- Genesis 6:15, the size of the ark
- Genesis 6:14-16, the ark’s decks and rooms
- Genesis 6:17, the Hebrew word for “flood”
- No mention of any steering mechanism (rudder, oars, poles, etc.)
- Genesis 6:18, eight people repopulated the post-Flood world.
- Genesis 6:19, animals on the ark
- Genesis 6:21, provisions for food
- Genesis 7:3, ark’s purpose: to preserve life
- Genesis 7:4, “every living thing”
- Genesis 7:11, “all the fountains of the great deep”
- Genesis 7:19-20, Flood waters covered the highest mountains.
- Genesis 7:21, “all flesh died”
- Genesis 7:24, Flood waters continued to rise for 150 days.
- Genesis 8:4, ark rested on the mountains of Ararat.
- Genesis 8:5, tops of mountains appear on the 225th day.
- Genesis 8:14, time on the ark: 371 days
- Genesis 8:17, mandate and blessing
- Genesis 8:21-22, God’s promise
- Genesis 9:6, capital punishment

B. The Geological Evidence

- The global extent of identical sediments in horizontal layers.

- Contiguous surfaces of those sediment layers have not eroded.
- Those sediment layers were deposited by water.
 - ✓ Coconino sandstone crossbedding in the Grand Canyon of Arizona.
 - ✓ Wind-created dunes have angles of 30-34 degrees; but, Coconino has angles of 20-27 degrees.
 - ✓ Wind-created dunes contain silicon particles; Coconino has various minerals.
 - ✓ Wind-created dunes produce rounded grains; Coconino has angular grains.
 - ✓ Wind-created dunes produce uniform grains; Coconino has non-uniform grains.
- The “Great Unconformity”
- Fossils—with some even in vertical orientation (e.g., the nautiloids).
- Superfaults and giant folds without tremendous fracturing—bent while pliable, due to water content.
- Huge boulders transported by water and mud.

II. The Flood Was Catastrophic in Nature

A. Biblical Evidence

- See the Genesis record in the “Extent” section we already covered.
 - ✓ Mass violent death wiping out all life.

B. Geological Evidence

- See the evidences about the geologic column of water-deposited sediments—especially the power of water and mud and the existence of the “Great Unconformity.”
- The fossil record—e.g., more than 6 million animals buried in Siberia.
 - ✓ Sudden burial in order to preserve bodies (especially soft tissues).
 - ✓ Violent burials—severely broken animal skeletons and leaves and branches stripped from trees.
 - ✓ A record of death.

Conclusion

- The writer’s (Moses’s) intent: the Flood was global and catastrophic.
- The text of the account supports these two factors without using exaggeration.
- The Flood had a significant impact with the accompanying geologic upheaval alone.
- Extrabiblical geological evidence confirms the biblical record.
- Extrabiblical evidence interpreted through the bias of an anti-supernatural, secular world view cannot supersede the divinely revealed text.
- Secular science is not static.
- Secular scientists too often apply an antisupernaturalistic filter and faith system.
- When the plain sense of the biblical text makes sense and is consistent with everything else in Scripture, seek no other sense.