

## By Faith We Understand

### INTRO

Good morning! It's great to be back here with you, and thank you, Alistair, for the opportunity to speak again at OIC.

This morning, I'd like to speak on a topic that I believe is extremely important. What the topic we are going to consider this morning boils down to, in my opinion, is this —

Are we allowing the opinions of fallible men, most of whom are unbelievers, to mold and shape what we believe regarding the meaning and teachings of God's Word?

I'd like to begin by reading a verse from the 11th chapter of Hebrews, the famous chapter on faith.

Verse 3 says this:

BY FAITH WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE UNIVERSE WAS CREATED BY THE WORD OF GOD, SO THAT WHAT IS SEEN WAS NOT MADE OUT OF THINGS THAT ARE VISIBLE.

And the question every person who claims to be a Christian needs to ask himself or herself is this —

Do I *really* believe this?

Did God create the universe, our planet, and us as the Bible says He did in both the Old and New Testaments? Or is the universe the result of the so-called "Big Bang" about 13.7 billion years ago? Is our planet really 4.2 billion years old or is it closer to 10,000 years old? And, as some of you might be thinking right now, is it even important whether evolution is true or not?

Many Christians think, "Who cares if the Earth is thousands or billions of years old as long as you trust in Jesus?" I believe it is **very** important, both theologically and in regard to how our position on this issue could impact our faith and our view of the Bible.

Ken Ham, founder of the creation science organization Answers in Genesis said it well.

*"The point we need to understand is the Gospel comes from this book called the Bible. And if generations of people have been led to believe they can't really trust the Bible or led to doubt that you can trust its authority or doubt its history — eventually they will reject the Bible and won't listen to the Gospel."*

Christians, both nominal Christians and deeply committed Christians, believe a variety of things regarding the origin of the universe and the planet on which we live.

Some Christians believe the exact same thing that most atheists believe, namely that our planet and all the lifeforms on it are the result of billions of years of blind chance, just as Charles Darwin theorized. In other words, God created life on Earth using evolution, meaning that every person who has ever lived is descended from apes — apes that evolved from so-called “simple celled organisms” over billions of years.

Some Christians, in order to go along with the 4 billion-year-old-Earth theory, believe that God helped evolution along from time to time, and then He created human beings billions of years after evolution led to so-called pre-humans, who didn't have a soul, such as *Australopithecus*, *Homo Erectus*, and Neanderthal man.

Other Christians, for the same reason, believe God created the world just as it says in Genesis 1:1, but some catastrophic event destroyed it all. Then after a gap of 4 billion years between Genesis 1:1 and 1:3, God created the present world's flora and fauna in 6 literal days.

And some Christians take a 100% literal reading and interpretation of Genesis chapter 1 as the basis of their beliefs, namely that the planet on which we live and all the life on it were created in 6 literal, 24-hour days as it says in the Bible.

I am fully aware that this topic is much too vast to cover in one message. But it is my prayer that God will use this one short message to encourage those of you who take the Bible literally. And it is my prayer that those who accept the opinions of scientists as the truth will at least consider the evidence that supports a literal interpretation of Genesis.

Let me state at the start, though, that I'm not saying you have to believe a literal interpretation of Genesis 1 through 11 in order to be saved. However, if a Christian feels it's OK to reject the literal reading of Scripture if it doesn't line up with what the **world** says, that Christian is surely standing on shaky ground!

Of course, **there are** allegorical passages in the Bible, but Genesis is not one of them. There is no doubt that Moses wrote Genesis as a **historical record**. I'd like to consider this issue from two viewpoints — scientific and theological.

## I. SCIENTIFIC ISSUES — THE AGE OF THE EARTH

As I said earlier, most evolutionists teach that the Earth is over 4 billion years old, and they teach that all the life forms on Earth today, including man, evolved during those 4 billion years from single-cell organisms. Therefore, evolutionists do not believe the Earth was created by an omnipotent God, but, rather, is the result of chance and nothing more.

Christians who believe in evolution believe in God, but they also believe He created the universe using the Big Bang, and that evolution, as taught in schools all over the world today, is the means God used to “create” life on Earth.

Please remember that evolution is nothing more than a **theory**, no matter what scientists may say. It cannot be replicated or proven using scientific methodology. For this reason, despite what scientists and school teachers around the world say, there is no scientific **proof** that what evolutionists say took place hundreds of millions of years ago is true. There are only **explanations** about what **might** have happened.

Of course, those who believe that God created the universe and the Earth in 6 literal days are also unable to replicate that miraculous event. We can look at the evidence and facts available to us, but in the end it comes down to **faith**.

This is one point that evolutionists bring up — they claim that evolution is science and the belief in creation is faith, not science. But after studying evolution and creation science for over thirty years, I can say without the slightest hesitation that evolutionists need a tremendous amount of faith to believe evolution is true. In fact, they need **much more** faith to believe in evolution than creationists need to believe a literal interpretation of Genesis.

Let's look now at **just a few** of the reasons that millions of Christians, including thousands of scientists, choose to believe the Biblical account instead of evolution.

### **A. INACCURATE DATING METHODS**

One reason Biblical creation is so hard for people to accept is that they believe what they have been taught about the age of the universe and the age of the Earth.

Scientists tell us the Earth is more than 4 billion years old, and they **need to say this** because they readily admit that evolution requires this much time for life to evolve. So it's of central importance to ascertain whether or not it's possible for the Earth to be as old as scientists claim, and to also consider how they come up with the the huge numbers they use to date rocks, fossils, and other ancient things. If it can be shown that the Earth is much younger than 4 billion, or that the dating methods used by scientists are not reliable, the theory of evolution would fall by the wayside.

We often hear scientists talk about various dating methods, such as Carbon-14 and potassium argon dating. We don't have time to go into the science behind these methods, but I want to discuss how inaccurate these methods actually are.

Scientists often use potassium-argon dating date the age of rocks. This process measures the ratio of radioactive argon to radioactive potassium in the rock, and uses the decay rates of the radioactive potassium and radioactive argon to determine the age of the rock. Scientists want people to believe that this method of dating is accurate and reliable, but the facts are different.

For example, scientists tested potassium-argon dating on a lava flow that took place in Hawaii in 1800. Even though this lava was less than 200 years old, the tests gave an age between 1 billion and 2.4 billion years! Similar testing on a lava flow in New Zealand gave ages between 145,000 and 465,000 years even though the lava was know to be less than 1,000 years old! Carbon-14 dating also has serious problems, often giving dates much older than the actual age of the object.

## B. “MODERN” OBJECTS FOUND IN COAL

Scientists tell us that coal is hundreds of millions of years old and that modern humans did not evolve until about 150,000 years ago. But several discoveries during the last 100 years or so make this very hard to believe.

For example, in Texas, in 1936, a hammer was found embedded in rock that was supposedly 400 million years old. And in 1944, a 10-year-old boy in West Virginia found this brass bell inside a lump of coal when it was dropped and broke open. The seam of coal where the lump of coal was mined from was thought to be 300,000 million years old.

Clearly the previously assumed ages of the rocks in which these objects were found is off by hundreds of millions of years. Humans have only had the technology to produce iron hammers and brass bells for, at most, 5,000 or 6,000 years.

So how did they end up in rocks that are hundreds of millions years old? Well, they didn't, actually. They ended up in rocks that are only *thousands* of years old, proving that the Earth is not 4 billion years old.

And since the Earth is not billions of years old or even millions of years old, evolution cannot be an explanation for the origin of life on Earth.

## C. SOFT TISSUE IN DINOSAUR BONES

Another problem evolutionists have is the discovery of soft tissue and even blood cells in dinosaur fossils. According to evolutionists, dinosaurs died out about 65 million years ago. But in 2005, Tyrannosaurus Rex bones were found in Wyoming that still contained soft tissue and red blood cells, along with collagen and other proteins. Some of the tissue was still elastic, despite the fact that it was found in rock that was supposedly 65 million years old! And in China, scientists have recently discovered dozens of fossils, that are supposedly 130 million years old, with soft tissue, including skin and gills.

Instead of rethinking the age of the Earth, evolutionary scientists scratch their heads and try to come up with a way to explain the soft tissue and blood cells found in fossils that are supposedly a hundred million years old. But, since it isn't scientifically possible there is really only one logical conclusion — the fossils are much, much younger than thought to be.

## D. “POLYSTRATE” FOSSILS

Before looking at what the Bible says about today's topic, I'd like to briefly touch on one more topic, out of many more that we could look at. As you know, sedimentary rocks are formed by the settling of sediment and mud that forms layers that are eventually compressed and harden into rock. Many of these layers are said to have formed hundreds of thousands, even millions of years after the previous layer.

We've already seen that dating rocks by potassium argon and other methods is unreliable and often off by many millions, even billions of years. But another problem with the ages assigned to some sedimentary rocks is the fact that fossilized trees can be found standing vertically through the layers of rock.

Such trees, which creation scientists refer to as polystrate fossils, could not have been standing for hundreds of thousands of years while the various layers of sediment gradually settled around them.

All the things I just shared about dating methods, objects buried in coal, soft tissue in dinosaur bones, and polystrate fossils are just a few of the scientific reasons why Darwinian evolution cannot be true.

We didn't even consider how the scientific fields of microbiology, biology, physics, genetics, astronomy and paleontology show that there is a 0% chance of that evolution took place.

If you are interested in learning more about this interesting topic, I urge you to buy some of the excellent books on creation science. Please pick up a list of recommended books before you go home today. And if you are interested, there are some materials here this morning that you can take home with you if you'd like.

## II. BIBLICAL ISSUES

### A. WHAT OUR CREATOR SAID ABOUT CREATION

Now that we've considered a few science-based reasons why evolutionary theory is not a possible explanation for the lifeforms and geology we find on Earth, let's look at what the Bible says about creation. Let's start with what God Himself has said about our world in His Word.

#### 1. Old Testament verses

Genesis 1:1 is one of the most famous verses in the Bible.

IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.

And at the beginning of the message, we read Hebrews 11:3 which says,

BY FAITH WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE UNIVERSE WAS CREATED BY THE WORD OF GOD, SO THAT WHAT IS SEEN WAS NOT MADE OUT OF THINGS THAT ARE VISIBLE.

The psalmist declared in Psalm 33:6,8-9,

BY THE WORD OF THE LORD THE HEAVENS WERE MADE. ... LET ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD STAND IN AWE OF HIM! FOR HE SPOKE, AND IT CAME TO BE; HE COMMANDED, AND IT STOOD FIRM.

Why are we commanded to stand in awe of the Lord? Because when God commands something to be or to happen, it happens *in that instant*. Not after billions or millions of years, but the moment He commands.

When God said in Genesis 1, "LET THERE BE LIGHT," THERE WAS LIGHT.

When He said, "LET THE WATERS BELOW THE HEAVENS BE GATHERED INTO ONE PLACE, AND LET THE DRY LAND APPEAR," there were seas and continents.

And when He said, “LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, ACCORDING TO OUR LIKENESS,” ... GOD CREATED MAN; MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM.

Another very important thing to note is this. In Genesis 1, verses 5 – 31, we see the expression “there was evening and there was morning” “one day”, or the “second day”, or “third day”. The Hebrew word used here for “day” is the word “yom”, which, in the Old Testament, is translated 95% of the time as a literal 24-hour day.

And there is no doubt that Moses intended the 24-hour meaning because, guided by the Holy Spirit, he wrote “there was evening and there was morning” so his readers would understand he was talking about 24-hour days. Though some Christians try to make this word “day” mean periods of time that are millions of years long, it just isn’t allowed by the text.

The same can be said for these famous words spoken by God in the 4th commandment.

<sup>9</sup> SIX DAYS YOU SHALL LABOR AND DO ALL YOUR WORK, <sup>10</sup> BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH OF THE LORD YOUR GOD. ... <sup>11</sup> FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, AND RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY.

If we say we believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, then we must accept that our Creator really did create the world and everything in it. He created it by speaking it into existence in 6 literal 24-hour days.

And one more important thing to consider. If evolution is true, and we are actually descended from single-celled organisms, where did the human soul come from? It certainly didn’t evolve from soul-less amoebas and worms!

Ecclesiastes 12:7 says that when we die, “the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”

Your soul was given to you by your Creator, not as the result of billions of years of evolution! Anyone who truly believes in evolution, must deny the existence of the human soul, and I don’t know of any Christian who would do that!

## **2. New Testament verses**

There are many more passages we could consider in the Old Testament, but what about the New Testament? What did Jesus and the apostles have to say about the Genesis account?

When asked by the Pharisees about marriage and divorce, Jesus said this in Mark 10:6.

“FROM THE BEGINNING OF CREATION, ‘GOD MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.’”

In other words, God didn’t create mankind billions of years after He began His creation of the universe using the Big Bang!

And as a slight tangent, many of the Christians who don't believe in 6-day creation also have trouble accepting the Biblical account of Noah and the ark he built in obedience to God.

Jesus made it very clear that the recorded history of Noah and the worldwide flood is 100% factual as written. Jesus validated Genesis 6-8 with these words in Luke 17:26-27.

“AND JUST AS IT HAPPENED IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, SO IT WILL BE ALSO IN THE DAYS OF THE SON OF MAN: THEY WERE EATING, THEY WERE DRINKING, THEY WERE MARRYING, THEY WERE BEING GIVEN IN MARRIAGE, UNTIL THE DAY THAT NOAH ENTERED THE ARK, AND THE FLOOD CAME AND DESTROYED THEM ALL.”

So, we see that Jesus validated the Genesis accounts of 6-day creation and the worldwide flood of Noah's day, which is what caused most of the fossils found today to be buried and preserved.

It is so important that Christians give priority to God's Word and not the opinions of fallible men of science, so-called. Let the scoffers say what they want to; the Bible is God's infallible Word, and I pray that everyone here accepts it as such.

## **B. DINOSAURS IN THE BIBLE**

One criticism of a literal interpretation of the Genesis 1 creation account is that if it is accurate, then dinosaurs and humans had to live at the same time. And, of course, scientists tell us that the dinosaurs died out tens of millions of years before man evolved. But the Bible tells a different story.

In Job chapter 40, God describes a dinosaur to Job, a dinosaur that Job has seen and knows.

15 “LOOK AT THE BEHEMOTH, WHICH I MADE ALONG WITH YOU AND WHICH FEEDS ON GRASS LIKE AN OX. 16 WHAT STRENGTH HE HAS IN HIS LOINS, WHAT POWER IN THE MUSCLES OF HIS BELLY! 17 HIS TAIL SWAYS LIKE A CEDAR; THE SINEWS OF HIS THIGHS ARE CLOSE-KNIT. 18 HIS BONES ARE TUBES OF BRONZE, HIS LIMBS LIKE RODS OF IRON. 19 HE RANKS FIRST AMONG THE WORKS OF GOD.” (NIV)

Almost every English Bible, if it makes a notation about what Behemoth is, will say it is either a hippopotamus or an elephant. And for some reason, two of the major Japanese translations just go ahead and translate it as hippopotamus. But, is this translation or interpretation correct?

To be sure, a hippo eats vegetation, and has strong muscles and sturdy leg bones. So does an elephant. But do hippos and elephants have a tail that resembles a cedar tree? And who can say, with a straight face, that a hippo ranks first among the the animals God created?!

But there is an animal that matches the description of Behemoth in every detail, including its tail. A dinosaur!

If the creation days in Genesis 1 were truly 24-hour days, which I believe they were, then it is only natural that humans and dinosaurs lived at the same time.

And it would explain why we can find drawings and carvings of dinosaurs all over the world, why there are so many accounts of people who have reported seeing dinosaurs or dinosaur-like creatures within the last 100 years, and why there are so many accounts of dragons from all over the world, including some within the last several hundred years.

### C. DEATH BEFORE SIN?

One very important reason why Christians who believe in evolution are not faithful to the Bible has to do with what the Bible teaches about sin and death.

Evolution, with its billions of years of death and mutations, cannot be true if the Bible is true, because the Bible says that death entered the world when Adam and Eve sinned.

God warned Adam in Genesis 2:17, “FROM THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL YOU SHALL NOT EAT, FOR IN THE DAY THAT YOU EAT FROM IT YOU WILL SURELY DIE.”

But, as we all know, Adam and Eve were deceived by Satan and ate from the tree. In Romans 5:12, the apostle Paul tells us what happened as a result.

JUST AS THROUGH ONE MAN SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, AND DEATH THROUGH SIN, AND SO DEATH SPREAD TO ALL MEN, BECAUSE ALL SINNED.

Do you see what Paul said about sin and death? Death **entered the world** as a result of Adam’s sin. In other words, there was no death prior to Adam’s sin.

Remember, Genesis 1:31 says that when God finished all His creative work on the sixth day, He “saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.”

Also, because scientists have found cancer in dinosaur bones, Christians who believe in evolution must also believe that there were hundreds of millions of years of **sickness**, as well as death **before** Adam sinned. They also have to believe that disease and death were **God’s fault** because they were part of what He created **before** Adam sinned.

As you can see, whether or not Christians believe in evolution or Biblical creation is a very important matter, because believing in evolution impugns the character, perfection, and power of God.

### D. THE ULTIMATE PLAN — THE RESTORATION OF PERFECT CREATION

Now, Adam’s sin brought about not only his death and Eve’s death, it also subjected the entire world to death. As a result of Adam’s sin, the animals came to experience death and planet began to experience natural disasters. This is why God’s ultimate plan involves the salvation, the restoration of our fallen world to its former, perfection before sin entered the world.

Romans 8:21 says,

CREATION ITSELF WILL BE LIBERATED FROM ITS BONDAGE TO DECAY AND BROUGHT INTO THE GLORIOUS FREEDOM OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

This is why we must interpret the first 3 chapters of Genesis literally.

In these chapters we see that the world was created perfect and sinless, with no death or suffering. Adam and Eve were free to eat of the tree of life and would have lived forever if they hadn't sinned. But sin destroyed that perfection and brought death into the world.

God's plan from the beginning has been to restore this fallen and dying world to its original condition. Jesus' death and resurrection provided not only for our redemption and the salvation of our souls, it also provided for the salvation of the fallen planet on which we live.

This is why Paul wrote of creation being liberated from its bondage to death and decay. This will happen when the Lord recreates our world, as described in 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1,3, and 4.

ACCORDING TO [GOD'S] PROMISE WE ARE LOOKING FOR NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS.

<sup>1</sup> THEN I SAW A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH, FOR THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE FIRST EARTH HAD PASSED AWAY. ... <sup>3</sup> "BEHOLD, THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD IS WITH MAN. ... <sup>4</sup> HE WILL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES, AND DEATH SHALL BE NO MORE, NEITHER SHALL THERE BE MOURNING, NOR CRYING, NOR PAIN ANYMORE, FOR THE FORMER THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY."

And when this happens, Revelation 2 and 22, the last chapter of the Bible, the chapter of the Bible that brings God's glorious plan to a close, says that all those who have been cleansed of their sin by faith in Jesus Christ will live forever on the restored new Earth, and be free to eat of the **tree of life**, just as Adam and Eve did.

## CONCLUSION

As you can see, a literal interpretation of Genesis shows the amazing wisdom and grace that runs from the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation. So, no, we don't have to believe in 6-day creation to be saved. And we don't have to believe the Bible talks about dinosaurs to be saved. And we don't have to believe in the worldwide flood of Noah's day to be saved.

But, if we want to honor the Bible as God's inspired and eternal truth, and not place more value on the opinions of men than on the Word of God, if we want to believe what Moses and the apostle Paul wrote, and what Jesus said, and if we want to have a faith that is theologically sound — a faith that is built on an understanding of the Gospel of Christ as it pertains to the created world and the human soul — then we must believe and interpret the Genesis account of creation and the fall of man just as it is written, and not look to fallible scientists who deny the existence of God to tell us what is true.

It is my prayer that everyone here this morning will choose to accept the Bible as God's eternal and inspired truth, and that you will build your life of faith as a Christian on that truth.

Thank you.