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The Prehistoric World Vs. Genesis

Dinosaurs, the Ice Age, cavemen: Is the biblical timeline really at odds with scientific discoveries?

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Over the past century of biblical archaeology, a plethora of finds have been discovered backing up many of the biblical stories. Thus far, nearly 60 individuals and dozens of cities found in the Hebrew Bible have been independently proved through archaeological discoveries, in addition to cultural customs, minor skirmishes, major conflicts, architectural elements, articles of clothing, dietary details and even common sayings.

Archaeology has forced Bible skeptics to repeatedly adjust their arguments to maintain their conclusion that the Bible is flawed. *Belshazzar was a fictional character!* (Archaeological proof was discovered in 1854.) *The Hittite Empire never existed!* (Archaeological proof was discovered in 1906.) *King David was a myth!* (Archaeological proof was discovered in 1993.) And so on.

Stating that archaeology “proves the Bible true” is uncontroversial to believers, but jarring to skeptics. Skeptics argue that no matter how many biblical individuals or cities or civilizations are discovered, the Bible as a whole cannot be true. Because, they argue, *Genesis*.

The biblical book of origins is completely at odds with a host of scientific discoveries about the past: the age of Earth, the dinosaurs, the Ice Age, prehistoric man. Or so they suppose.

6,000 Vs. 13.8 Million Years

Many Bible believers think the Earth and universe are 6,000 years old. They believe that God’s creation of the heavens and Earth and the “days of creation” in Genesis 1 occurred all at once. Therefore, they believe, dinosaurs were created at the same time as man and either existed until the Flood, or were even brought aboard Noah’s ark. These believers are known as “young Earth” creationists.

Scientists say the measured expansion of the universe, the fact that light from most stars has taken billions of years to reach Earth, and the obvious age of the dinosaurs prove these beliefs false.

These scientific facts *are* problems for many believers, but not for the Bible itself. The Bible actually *does not* state that the Earth was created 6,000 years ago. Genesis 1:1 states: “In the beginning God created the heaven[s] and the earth.” This has no time stamp: It could be referring to a time millions of years ago. Verse 2 states: “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” Notice that heavens, Earth, darkness and “the deep” are all described as being created by God *before* the seven days of creation! And notice “without form, and void” (*tohu* and *bohu* in the original Hebrew). That doesn’t just mean that the Earth was unfinished; it means it was in a state of total desolation. Isaiah 45:18 asserts that God “formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain” *Vain* is translated from *tohu*: chaos. The Bible specifies that God *did not* create Earth in a state of chaos.

Now look at the word “was” in Genesis 1:2. The Hebrew word for “was” could be translated “became.” Verse 2 is stating that after God originally created the Earth, it *became* without form and void. So what happened?

Genesis 1 describes *two* creations of the Earth! Verse 1 describes the creation of the physical universe, perhaps millions or billions of years ago. This was the world of dinosaurs and other prehistoric beasts and sea creatures. And this was the world that, as science has proved, came to a mysterious, cataclysmic end! Evidence exists of vast, planet-wide destruction, apparently relating to asteroid impacts, as well as volcanic eruptions and sea-level changes. The sedimentary stratum line of this destruction layer has been unearthed at sites all around the world. It is noted to contain high levels of iridium—a metal rare on Earth but common in asteroids. In scientific terms, this disaster is technically known as the Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction event. It is what killed the dinosaurs.

Yes, Earth *became* “without form and void.” Darkness indeed came upon the face of the deep. This account of total *darkness* matches up with the conditions following a massive asteroid impact. This impact is most commonly associated with the massive Chicxulub crater found in the Gulf of Mexico. This crater measures 93 miles wide and 12 miles deep, and it relates directly to the same period of destruction strata discovered around the world. Estimates vary wildly, but the energy released by the impact of this asteroid could have been up to 921 *billion* times more powerful than the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima.

The scientific evidence of destruction matches the biblical account of a primordial destruction. Other verses in the Bible describe a massive *angelic rebellion* that occurred following the original creation of the Earth, yet before the creation of man. (See Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, and read “Dinosaurs and the Bible.”) This angelic rebellion wreaked havoc on the Earth, extinguishing dinosaurs and other prehistoric life forms and ending the Mesozoic Era. Scientists date this Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction event to around 65 million years ago. This might be right or wrong—again, the Bible gives no time stamp.

Scientists also talk about other mass extinctions before the Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction event. This might be right or wrong—again the Bible does not give us many details about the prehistoric world.

Cenozoic: ‘New Life’

“And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2). Here on this destroyed, wasted planet, God began to *re-create* the Earth.

Genesis 1 goes on to record the *re-creation* of the surface of the Earth, not the original creation of the entire Earth, which was recorded in Genesis 1:1. Psalm 104:30 specifies: “Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou *renewest* the face [surface] of the earth.”

Genesis 1:1-2 is actually the briefest of summaries of the primordial universe and Earth. Millions of years could have transpired between verses 1 and 2, and even more years could have transpired before the end of verse 2. There are no time stamps. But with the *re-creation* of the surface of the Earth, the Bible and science do begin to provide time stamps.

Following the extinction event ending the Mesozoic Era, we come to the next era of planet Earth, the Cenozoic Era. *Cenozoic* means “new life,” and it is the era we are still living in today. This is essentially the “age of mammals,” and it likely began with the re-creation of Genesis 1.

The rest of this chapter records God stabilizing and re-creating the surface of the Earth in six days (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (verse 3). This starts off the re-creation week, clearing the darkness that covered the destroyed Earth. This week of renewal culminated in the creation of man on the sixth day, and finally the establishment of the Sabbath on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3). God re-created the surface of this world specifically for *man*—a new divine plan to make man “in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). For information on this divine purpose for man’s creation, request *Mystery of the Ages*, noting Chapter 3. This would be the world of *mammals*—a world within which man could thrive and have “dominion,” as the same verse says. Man certainly could not have had dominion over a world of dinosaurs.

The Cenozoic Era, this mammalian period, includes prehistoric man and many warm-blooded animals, such as “Ice Age” woolly mammoths, giant sloths, saber-toothed tigers, and (my favorite) glyptodonts. Scientists see that the Cenozoic Era began with a rapid *explosion* of unique life forms—and they have trouble explaining what would have caused it.

Genesis 5 records a genealogy beginning with the first man, Adam, and establishes that the re-creation week occurred roughly 6,000 years ago.

Stop right there! say the critics. Scientists tell us that mammals, Ice Age creatures, the Neanderthal, Denisovan, *Homo* human ancestor bones and other evidence show that mammals and even “modern man” developed not 6,000 years ago but tens and hundreds of thousands of years ago.

A Really Bad Date

Put simply, dating methods are at best unreliable, at worst disastrously *wrong*. Methods such as carbon, uranium, and samarium dating over vast spans of time are unreliable. Sometimes these methods yield wild data, but their main flaw is that they are calibrated based on *assumptions*. They operate on the theory of uniformitarianism, the belief that the Earth was shaped by very slow, gradual changes. If the Earth was shaped by dramatic and sudden events, as the Bible records, then these dating methods are invalid.

Radiometric dating determines age by analyzing the prevalence of certain radioactive isotopes, and assumes that the amount of these isotopes on Earth has remained roughly constant. Yet scientific research has been proving that this assumption is not just slightly wrong but utterly wrong. Solar flares, which occur frequently, fluctuations in Earth's magnetic field, minuscule residue from nuclear weapons testing, and even changes in the seasons, have been shown to affect the prevalence of these isotopes.

Generally, these issues haven't led to any significant response from the broader scientific community regarding dating methods. Isotopic dating is the much-cherished tool of evolutionary scientists attempting to plot animal development over millennia. Certain measures have been undertaken to correct the errors, such as revamping dates found to be 10,000-plus years off, to throwing out some dates entirely. Still, radioisotope dating is often way off the mark, generally providing exaggeratedly old dates. One example highlighted by the Associates for Biblical Research is of a Himalayan geological event that was originally given an age 20 times greater than that established by later research (an especially significant discrepancy, considering the date is in the realm of *millions* of years ago).

It is faulty logic to assume a constant, stable, uniform existence of Earth's surface. Scientists know that catastrophes have pockmarked Earth's past, the Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction event being a case in point.

What else could have disrupted the uniformity of material on the surface of the Earth, dramatically affecting the dating of early human history? Perhaps something like a *worldwide flood*?

Biblical chronology dates this catastrophic event to nearly 4,500 years ago. Such an event would cause dates prior to that time to be *significantly* inflated. Scientists know that moisture affects carbon dating results. Water causes the leaching of compounds and, if unaccounted for, can cause greatly exaggerated dating results.

Adam and Eve

Did you know that geneticists have proved that all mankind descended from *just* one man *and just* one woman? They call the man "y-chromosome Adam" and the woman "mitochondrial Eve." Scientists date this "Adam and Eve" to roughly 200,000 years ago on the evolutionary spectrum (though the proposed date has regularly yo-yoed from between 50,000 and 500,000 years ago). These dates are calculated by calibrating y-chromosome and mitochondrial mutation rates to fit timelines of human prehistory based on radiocarbon and Potassium-argon dating (which we have previously established as unreliable). Research conducted by geneticist Dr. John Sanford and Dr. Robert Carter on this subject has found that applying modern mutation rates to ancient humans points to y-chromosome Adam and mitochondrial Eve living sometime within the past 6,000 years. This subject is discussed in detail in our article "The Case for Adam and Eve" (watchJerusalem.co.il/465). The article examines the surprisingly large amount of scientific evidence for the biblical couple—from genetics to morphology to archaeology.

Geneticists have also been surprised to find that nearly all animal species also trace back to a single pair. Those pairs are dated to sometime within the past 250,000 years. Scientists generally attempt to explain this as a "population bottleneck," which must have resulted from a massive extinction event. (Incidentally, this too hurts the case for uniformitarianism.) Interestingly, researchers felt it necessary to follow up their findings by hastening to add that their "study is grounded in and strongly supports Darwinian evolution, including the understanding all life has evolved from a common biological origin over several billion years" (*Daily Mail*, Dec. 6, 2018).

The developing field of genetic research is proving problematic for the evolutionary theory. It has already proved that the ancient quasi-human Neanderthal "species" is actually 100 percent "human," as closely related to modern humans as Germans are to Chinese. Actually, all those ancient human species—Neanderthals, Denisovans, *Homos*—are simply one and the same "species." And they fit well within the biblical account of the world prior to the Flood.

The Pre-Flood World

Several particulars recorded in Genesis 6 about the pre-Flood world match the archaeological record. Genesis 6:4 describes a race of "giants" living on the Earth prior to the Flood. Unlike our modern idea of giants, the Hebrew word implies giants in physical strength. This actually matches the physique of the ancient Neanderthals, a large-boned, powerfully built, stocky race of humans.

The Bible also describes the pre-Flood world as one of widespread violence, debauchery and intermarriage. Archaeology and genetic research have found that human flesh was a common part of the diet for prehistoric humans. Genetics have proved that promiscuous early humans interbred multiple times in a "World of Debauchery," as headlined by the *Mirror* in November 2018. Research has shown that—just as the Bible describes—the different human groups, primarily *Homo sapiens*, Neanderthals and Denisovans, were all "interbreeding." (Notice Genesis 6:2-4: The "sons of God" and the

“daughters of men” actually refer to descendants of Seth and Cain.)

Something can even be said for the biblical account of pre-Flood longevity. Take a look at our article [Biblical Longevity of the First Humans](#)” for archaeological and biological evidence backing up the biblical account.

The Flood

Genesis 1:1-2 match up beautifully with the creation of the Earth and the universe, culminating in Earth's Mesozoic Era—the “age of the dinosaurs”—and the ensuing Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction. Genesis 1:3 onward marks the *re-creation* of the Earth, the start of the Cenozoic Era: the age of man and mammals. This period began 6,000 years ago. The dating is critically flawed and especially thrown off by a worldwide Flood that the Bible says occurred some 4,500 years ago.

Scientists have discovered through butchered remains and other evidence that “Ice Age” animals existed at the same time as early humans. What happened to these creatures? What happened to the human relatives of *Homo sapiens*: the Neanderthals and Denisovans?

Scientists recognize another extinction period they call the Quaternary extinction event. Its cause is much debated, but some link it to increasing temperatures, glacial activity, rising sea levels and *floods*. Could this have been the Flood of Noah's day that Genesis 7:20-21 say covered the mountains and killed all flesh that moved upon the earth, minus the species from each genus aboard the ark? And could such a flood be the reason for such piecemeal, scattered evidence of very early man—a skull here, a finger bone there?

If there was such a water-based extinction event, it is logical that all the structures archaeologists have discovered would date to some time *after* that catastrophe. Anything before the Flood would have been nearly obliterated. Scientists say that after this extinction event, civilizations began popping up around the Middle East. They say one of Earth's oldest cities is Jericho, which they traditionally date to roughly 10,000 b.c. . This is just after the traditional dating of the Quaternary extinction event. Scientists say the earliest religious settlement is Göbekli Tepe in Turkey, which they also date to roughly 10,000 b.c. . Peculiarly, it features all kinds of animals carved into its ritual monoliths. Is it coincidence that this site also emerged just following the Quaternary extinction event, and not far from Mount Ararat, where the Bible says the ark landed and unloaded the surviving humans and animals?

The dating of 10,000 B.C., of course, conflicts with the Bible, but we have already covered the issues with dating methods. What is interesting is that science acknowledges a major, possibly water-related extinction event and the subsequent emergence of civilization, starting in the Middle East.

The Bible places the Flood at circa 2500 B.C. Only following this period do we begin to see a clearer picture of ancient human civilizations. Ancient texts from around the world date to this general period. Interestingly, these texts describe versions of a creation story—a worldwide Flood story, and a tower-building and confusion of languages story (see Genesis 6-8, 11).

Science and the Bible: A Synthesis

Is the Bible's record of Earth's history incompatible with scientific discoveries? A resounding *no*! And you do not have to change your beliefs to fit the science. The *Trumpet* and its predecessor, the *Plain Truth*, have been publishing these same Bible principles for about 60 years, before much of this new scientific research has emerged. Genesis is not some murky, unscientific attempt to postulate a 6,000-year-old Earth and universe by writers ignorant of dinosaurs or the Ice Age. Scientific discoveries over the past several centuries have only served to confirm what was in the Bible already.

Setting aside the flawed dating methods, when comparing the modern scientific timeline of Earth with the biblical timeline, you see a remarkable synthesis of events. Scientists are at a loss to explain many of these events: the Quaternary extinction event, humans and animals descending from a single male and female ancestor, the rapid development of new life at the start of the Cenozoic Era, the extinction of life at the end of the Mesozoic Era, and the very origin of life and the universe.

The Bible explains all of these things. And it explains *why*.

Our 300-page book [Mystery of the Ages](#) by Herbert W. Armstrong, explains this biblical history in full detail (request your free copy). The first chapter explains who and what is God. Chapter 2 explains God's original purpose for creating the universe and Earth, as well as the angels, in Genesis 1:1. It details the angelic rebellion that led to the catastrophe that is Genesis 1:2. Chapter 3 details the purpose of man—why the Earth was re-created. Chapter 4 explains the origin and development of civilizations—why the world has become the way it is. Chapter 5 explains why God chose the ancient nation of Israel. Chapter 6 describes the history of God's people and the purpose of their calling. And Chapter 7 explains that subject misunderstood by so many in this world: the Kingdom of God—what is it, what comes after death, and what the future holds for mankind.

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