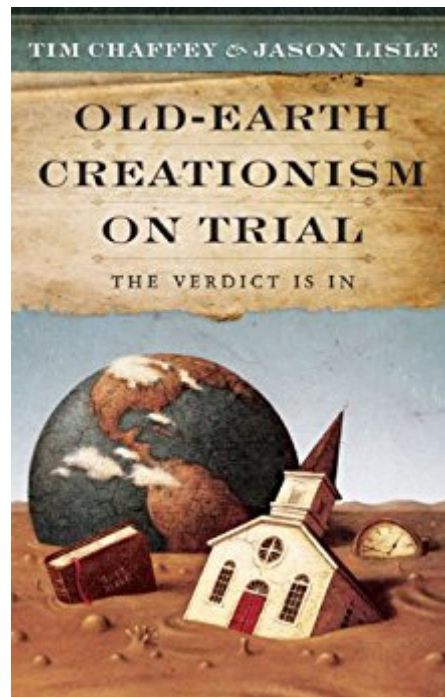




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# Old-Earth Creationism On Trial



## Synopsis

As the modern Church struggles to find a place of relevancy for a new generation that already has massive demands on its time and attention, more and more young people raised in the Church are leaving it â “ failing to find the answers to their questions of faith and life, beset with doubts raised by issues that the Church chooses not to address. Opting to skirt the controversy of Genesis as literal history, the biblical authority of the Holy Word is called into question and reduced to a collection of mere stories. More popularly considered an issue for schools or in the public realm, the conflicting views on the age of the earth also remain a pivotal issue within the Church â “ as it has for over two centuries. Was the Creation week literally six days? Does science really point to an old earth? Does the issue really matter for Christians? Should this issue even be discussed within the Church? Join authors Dr. Jason Lisle and Tim Chaffey as they put forth a case against an old-earth interpretation of Scripture. A comprehensive biblical, theological, and scientific critique of old-earth creationism, the book presents its compelling testimony in laymanâ™s terms to create a powerful debate that leads to unquestionable truth.

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## Customer Reviews

Tim Chaffey is an apologist who is the content manager for the "Ark Encounter"; he has written other books such as *In Defense of Easter: Answering Critical Challenges to the Resurrection of Jesus*, *Demolishing Supposed Bible Contradictions Volume 2*, *The Sons of God and the Nephilim*, etc. Jason Lisle is an astrophysicist with *Answers in Genesis*, who has also written *Logic & Faith: Discerning truth in logical arguments*, *Ultimate Proof of Creation*, *Taking Back Astronomy: The Heavens Declare Creation*, etc. They wrote in the Preface to this 2008 book, "This book is unique in that it provides a thorough biblical, theological, and scientific critique of old-earth creationism while maintaining its readability... Although scientific evidence certainly bears weight in the debate between the two camps, this work focuses mainly on biblical and theological arguments. After all, from a Christian perspective, if one side cannot support its view from Scripture, then it cannot be the proper view. Nonetheless, it is important to show that good science does support the biblical time scale... It is our hope that this book will serve to clarify the debate by giving an up-to-date defense of the young-earth view and by exposing the many fallacious arguments used in defense of the old-earth views... The primary goal of this work is to call the Church back to the authority of Scripture rather than trusting our own methods and ideas ..."

They state in the Introduction, "A bias is not always a bad thing. A correct worldview (or bias) will enhance our ability to correctly interpret evidence (just as an incorrect one will hamper our ability). This is why it is so important to base our thinking on God's infallible Word. Every person has a worldview and will inevitably interpret data through that filter whether they realize it or not. Therefore, it is very important to make sure we have the RIGHT worldview: that we start with correct, biblical assumptions when we approach science..." (Pg. 21-22)

Of the interpretation that Hebrews 4:3-5 suggests that God is still in his Sabbath rest from creation, they argue, "First, notice that the text does not say that the seventh day of the creation week is continuing to the present day. It merely reveals that God entered His rest on the seventh day... Imagine that a vacationing person said on Monday that he rested on Friday. It would not be reasonable to suggest that, since he was still resting on Monday, therefore it was still Friday." (Pg. 51)

On the question as to whether Job 41:19 suggests that Leviathan could breathe fire, they suggest, "Most young-earth creationists have no trouble believing that some kind of dinosaur or similar creature could have breathed fire. Since all we have are the bones of these creatures, it is impossible to rule out this prospect. But several living creatures strongly suggest that this is not a far-fetched idea: some eels produce electricity. Fireflies produce light and bombardier beetles produce an explosive, noxious gas heated to the boiling temperature of water..." (Pg. 64-65)

They explain, "All young-earth believers believe that light was created on the first day, as Genesis says. We differ from old-earth believers in that we do not believe this light came from the sun. We believe the sun

was not created until the fourth day, precisely as the text states (Gen 1:16). Young-earthers have consistently made their position clear and have even offered plausible explanations as to what the light on the first three days may have been: 'Where did the light come from? We are not told, but Genesis 1:3 certainly indicates it was a created light to provide day and night until God made the sun on Day 4 to rule the day He had made.' [Ken Ham,Â The New Answers Book]" (Pg. 67) Later, they elaborate, "The sun is not necessary for day and night---only a directional light source is needed. The Bible is clear that light was in existence since the first day... Revelation 21:22-22:5... states that in the New Jerusalem there will be no need of the sun because God's glory will illuminate it. This is a possibility as to where the light came from for the days in question. Another possibility is that God may have used a temporary light source. However, since the Bible does not tell us, we should be cautious and not dogmatic with our speculations." (Pg. 174) They point out, "The secular scientist reasons that if radioactive material decays slowly today, then it must ALWAYS have decayed slowly. However, we should not arbitrarily assume that such rates have not changed with time. In fact, scientists have been able to speed up certain kinds of radioactive decay by as much as a billion times!... Moreover, God could have accelerated rates of radioactive decay in the past using supernatural means not available to us. Although God would not arbitrarily change such rates, we know that God has acted in a supernatural way in the past in order to accomplish his will... Therefore, we cannot assume that radioactive decay happened during the creation week at the same rate it happens today." (Pg. 134-135) Of the Distant Starlight issue, they note, "we must recognize that creationists and evolutionists agree on SOME of the assumptions involving distant starlight. We agree that the galaxies really are far away because the techniques that allow us to measure such distances are logically sound, repeatable methods... Furthermore, most creationists agree that the light from the stars was not created 'already on its way.' The reason for this is that we see things happen in space; stars explode, pulsate, and so on. If we are merely observing light that was created in transit, then none of these things have actually occurred." (Pg. 140-141) They contend, "The distant starlight argument ... supposes that the light arrived on earth entirely according to today's laws of nature. Is this reasonable? A Christian should not assume that this must be so... The laws of nature are not adequate to describe how God created the universe... A consistent Christian must be open to the possibility that the mechanism God used to get the starlight during the creation week cannot be understood in terms of today's 'laws of nature.' This thought may be disappointing to science-minded individuals because we want to know everything. And, of course, it is also possible that God did use 'natural' means to get the starlight here. The point is that a Christian should not assume that this must be the case." (Pg. 142) They assert, "Since the Bible

undisputedly teaches a young earth, when someone claims that scientific evidence proves otherwise, we can be certain that they are mistaken. We have seen that faulty assumptions are responsible for inflated age estimates... Every 'scientific' old-earth argument we have come across involves either incorrect starting assumptions or logical fallacies." (Pg. 153) They state, "In all, there are ten generations totaling 1,556 years as Noah's 500th year. If the open view proponent could demonstrate a gap in these genealogies, it would greatly improve his argument, but he cannot. Jude 14 tells us that Enoch was the seventh from Adam... By adding up the years, we discover that Methuselah died the same year the Flood started. This biblical evidence excludes any possibility of inserting gaps into the Genesis 5 genealogies... Even if one could be verified, it does not advance the old-earth position since it would only add a few decades or perhaps centuries, but not millions of years." (Pg. 183) This book is a frank, up-to-date, and clearly written presentation of the young-earth position, and a critique of many old-earth positions. Whether or not one agrees with it, it will be of great interest to Christians studying these questions.

I read the draft for Tim Chaffey's portion of the book about two years ago. Even then I thought it was the best book on creationism from a Biblical perspective that I have ever read. This is KEY: Tim puts Old Earth Creationism on trial from a Biblical perspective. (Dr. Lisle adds the scientific portion of the argument.) You do not need to be a theologian or a scientist to understand and benefit greatly from this book. It is shocking to me how old earth creationists (OEC) hold to an inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Bible, but then get all wishy-washy when dealing with the creation accounts in Genesis. Tim graciously and effectively demonstrates the weakness of the OEC interpretation. If you are a young earth creationist, you will applaud this book. If you are an OEC, I think an honest reading will surprise you. Either way, your confidence in the reliability of Scripture will be strengthened. (Disclaimer: I am a personal friend of Tim Chaffey and have appreciated his ministry through Midwest Apologetics.)

First, I find it interesting that the book centers around a "trial". The book was published in 2008 when AiG, the ministry that Dr. Lisle was with at the time was in legal dispute with another young earth ministry CMI. It was encouraging that in "Is Genesis History" both groups were sitting at a table together (it is 10 years later now) and such matters are in the past. I still can't help but wonder if this is a large part of why Dr. Lisle left AiG. Dr. Lisle states that "Old-earth creationists must be able to conclusively demonstrate that Scripture repeatedly not only allows for, but also implies, an age of the earth in excess of 10,000 years." Even young earth creationists have done this. One of the best

defenses of gaps in the genealogies is found in appendix ii of "The Genesis Flood" Morris Whitcomb 1961 p. 474-489. I find their arguments much more persuasive than appendix c of OEC on trial. Dr. Lisle states that personal attacks are unnecessary and unbiblical, and states that we should cast down arguments not people. This is too true. I wish Dr. Lisle had written this before he wrote the chapters on the flood (chapter 5-6). You would think that the local flood view is the idea of Dr. Hugh Ross. But in "The Genesis Flood" 1961 on page 36, they go after Dr. Bernard Ramm for this. But in "The Christian View of Science and Scripture" 1954, Dr. Ramm states that "Although many Christians still believe in the universal flood, most of the recent conservative scholarship of the church defends a local flood." So go after the arguments, Dr. Lisle, not Ross, not Ramm, not the recent conservative scholarship of the 1950s, go after the arguments, and cast those down, not the people. By going after Ross on this you show the political motivation of your view. In Appendix E they state that "The big bang is the secular model of how the universe was formed." This completely denies the historical framework of the big bang in its entirety. The big bang was first proposed under a theistic worldview and Dr. Lisle knows this. The big bang gained dominance in the 1950s and was rejected by secular astronomers because of its theistic implications. There is a similar problem between those who hold a naturalistic worldview, and Christians who only view certain theories under a naturalistic lens. In both cases, it can be a blinder that keeps them from discovering the truth. The reason I have great respect for my brothers and sisters in Christ who are young earth creationists is that they are holding on to what they believe. They state in the book "God's Word clearly teaches a young earth and that settles the matter." If I became convinced that the Bible taught YEC, then I would hold on to it as well. But after comparing the claims of this book with what the Bible actually teaches, I strongly disagree and the inappropriate dogmatism of chapter 9 The Verdict and Recommendations does not help their case. If truth is on your side, then dogmatism like this is not necessary. My apologies to Tim Chaffey coauthor since I have been strictly using "Dr. Lisle".

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