

Seven Questions (Plus One) for the “Old-Earth Creationist”

by Todd Wilken

God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning— the sixth day. (Genesis 1:31)

No longer will there be any curse. (Revelation 22:3)

Old-Earth Creationism is the basic theory that God created the universe over the course of billions of years.

The first principle of Biblical interpretation is to read a text according to its plain, literal sense unless something in the text or its context requires a non-literal meaning. A good example is Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The plain, literal sense of the text is clear: God created the universe. Nothing in the text itself requires anything other than a literal reading of the words. Nor does anything in the immediate context require the reader to take the text in anything other than its plain literal sense. Indeed, nothing in the broader context of the entire Bible requires anything other than a literal reading of Genesis 1:1.

Old-Earth Creationists do accept the idea of a divine Creator. Old-Earth Creationists generally do accept the *sequence* of events the Genesis chapter one.

However Old-Earth Creationists reject the interpretation of the word “day” as a literal 24-hour solar day in Genesis 1. Instead they interpret the word “day” to mean “epoch”, “era” or “age”.

Old-Earth Creationists claim to take the text of Genesis chapter one seriously. They simply claim to find no reason in the text of Genesis 1 to conclude that the creation of the universe took a mere six 24-hour days.

The burden of proof lies upon the Old-Earth Creationist to demonstrate his views from the text of Genesis 1. To that end, here are seven questions (plus one) for the Old-Earth Creationist.

1. What in the text of Genesis 1 requires or suggests an old Earth?
2. What are the referents of the words "morning" and "evening" in Genesis 1?
3. What in the text of Genesis 1:26-27 requires or suggests the creation of man over millions of years?
4. Where in the text of the Genesis 2 and following is the transition from epoch-long days to 24-hour days?

5. What creative actions described in Genesis 1 require more than six 24-hour days to accomplish for a God Who creates *ex nihilo*?
6. How are we to understand the connection between the six epoch-days of creation and the sanctification of a literal seventh day in Genesis 2:1-3?
7. Are there considerations outside the text of Genesis that require an old Earth?

Finally there is one more question that Old-Earth Creationist must answer: Scripture clearly teaches that “through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). **According to the Old-Earth theory, what is the relationship between death and human sin? In other words, when did death enter the world?**

This final question is crucial. For if death is already a part of creation (in an evolutionary process) before a fall into sin, then death is not the result of human sin, but part and parcel of God’s creative activity.

If death is merely a part of God’s creative activity, then what was Jesus doing on the Cross? If not from the curse of death as a result of sin, from what was Jesus redeeming us?

The Old-Earth Creationist believes that he can keep intact the redemptive message of Scripture while rejecting the foundation for that message in Genesis 1-3 (a deathless creation, subsequently subjected to death by man’s fall into sin). This requires a fundamental inconsistency.

The error of Old-Earth Creationism not only rejects a literal six-day creation, it ultimately (albeit unintentionally) speaks against the Gospel itself.