

Teachings of Jesus

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

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Jesus and Creation

In the last lesson, we saw that Jesus had the highest regard for Old Testament Scripture as being correct, consistent, and, perhaps most importantly *about Him*.

Given that

Jesus clearly believed that Scripture was God's Word and therefore truth (John 17:17), and that it could not "be broken" (John 10:35), and that it was eternally inspired (Matthew 5:18). Scripture for Jesus was not merely inspired in terms of general ideas, or its broad meaning, but instead is inspired down to its actual words.

Jesus cited Genesis as literally true, e.g. Matthew 12:39-41, Matthew 19:4-5, Matthew 23:35, Matthew 24:37-39, Luke 17:28-32, John 8:39-41, 56-58

One of the most significant teachings to note is the first of these, Jesus' invocation of the story of Jonah in Matthew 12:39-41. Jesus did not see Jonah as a myth or legend; the meaning of the passage would be lost if it were. How could Jesus' death and resurrection serve as a sign, if the events of Jonah did not take place? Furthermore, Jesus says that the men of Nineveh will stand at the last judgment because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, but if the account of Jonah is a myth or symbolic, then how could the men of Nineveh stand at the last judgment?

In Matthew 19:4-6 Jesus quotes from both Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24. Jesus' use of Scripture here is authoritative in settling a dispute over the question of divorce, and is grounded in the creation of the first marriage, related to the very purpose of marriage (see Malachi 2:14-15). The passage is also striking in understanding Jesus' use of Scripture as He attributes the words spoken as coming from *the Creator* (Matthew 19:4).

There is no indication that Jesus understood the Old Testament, or any part of its historical narrative, as figurative, or as allegory.

What does the Bible reveal about *when* God created the universe?

John 1:1-3:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Revelation 4:10-11:

The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created'

Creationist Theories/Models/Beliefs

According to scientific dating methods and other observations, Earth is a bit over 4.5 billion years old.

But Biblical chronology only accounts for about 6,000 years.

How can these be reconciled? Various schools of thought have arisen. It's probably impossible to individually address all of them, but they tend to fall into a few large categories.

Young Earth Creationism *generally* believes that all of God's creation took place about 6,000 years ago. There are adherents who believe that if the Bible is the infallible, the Earth cannot be any older than that.

Ancient Earth Creationism *generally* holds that God created all things "with age", and therefore by scientific measurements are not necessarily in conflict with the Bible, regardless of whether they fall within the 6,000-year window or not.

Allegorical Creationism *generally* believes that at least some parts of the creation account aren't meant to be taken literally. Many in this camp believe that the "days" in Genesis 1 are symbolic of long eras of time.

Creation Gap Theory *generally* believes that the Bible allows for an extended period between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. Where verse 2 says, "The earth was without form, and void", the translation of "was" is expanded to "became". The Hebrew word used is normally translated as "was" (see also Genesis 2:7, 9:15 and 19:26). Holders of the Creation Gap Theory believe that translating this word as "became" puts the Bible in harmony with science and history. Genesis 1:1, they

believe, speaks of God's original creation of the Earth billions of years ago, while Genesis 1:3 begins the account of God's re-creation of the Earth after it had experienced great, natural, transformation and destruction.

Are Genesis 1 and 2 in conflict?

Genesis 1:25-26:

And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Genesis 2:19:

Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.

Some think that the creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 contradict each other. For example, Genesis 1 describes animals being created before Adam, while Genesis 2:19 *could* be read as if Adam had been created before the animals. As Lutherans we believe the Bible never contradicts itself, because it was inspired by God. Genesis 2:19 doesn't mean that God created Adam first and then the animals. The chronological (day-to-day) sequence of events is stated in Chapter 1, but not in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 complements and supplements Chapter 1. The two chapters taken together offer a complete picture of what happened and why.

Creation vs. Evolution and its variants

In Mark 10:6 Jesus said, “But from the beginning of creation, God ‘made them male and female.’” In the statement “from the beginning of creation” Jesus was saying that Adam and Eve were there at the beginning of creation, in other words, on day six, and not millions or billions of years after the beginning of creation.

Jesus also refers to Abel in Luke 11:49-51. Here Jesus talks about “the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world,” the foundation being the initial creation week described in Genesis (see Hebrews 4:3).

From Jesus’ understanding of Genesis chapters 1 and 2 it is clear that He believed in the account of creation as recorded there, in the creation of Adam as the first man, and He leaves no room for any sort of evolutionary timeline for the origin of man. Jesus clearly understood that Abel lived at the foundation of the world. This means that as the parents of Abel, Adam and Eve must also have been historical.

Jesus also made a strong connection between Moses’ teaching and his own (John 5:45–47), and Moses of course was pretty adamant on the timetable of Creation. See Exodus 20:9–11 and 31:17–18 for two examples.

A rather well-known former Pharisee, St. Paul, writes in Romans 5:12:

“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...”

Macro evolution teaches change, development, and “advancement” through death (beneficial mutations communicated through successive generations of life). This is incompatible with the teachings of Jesus, and the rest of Scripture.