

**Battle for the Beginning – Chapter 2**  
**How Did Creation Happen?**  
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[www.answersincreation.org/battle2.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/battle2.htm)

MacArthur begins this chapter with an argument against evolution involving "fiat" creation. This means God created life forms out of nothing, and not from previously existing life forms. While a decent argument against evolution, it has no bearing on old earth progressive creationists, as we also believe in creation out of nothing. It does, however, require some thinking on the part of the theistic evolutionist. It is still possible, however, to maintain fiat creation with evolution. No mention is made of how long it was from the time God said, "Make it so," and the time the creature appeared. If theistic evolutionists are comfortable with this, then there is no reason to not allow them this interpretation.

**Was the Earth Shaped by Constancy or by Catastrophe? (Page 50)**

The author uses this section to explain one of the most popular young earth creationist theories...that the rock layers of the earth were all formed via a catastrophic process. This idea provides no threat to old earth creationists, since it is clearly mistaken. Young earth creationists always frame this statement as an either/or scenario...either you believe in catastrophism, or you believe in uniformitarianism. They point to features in the rock record, and examples from modern depositional systems, showing that you can produce rock layers fast. I agree. We see hurricanes and floods depositing feet of sediment in one day. This proves nothing. In fact, this example of catastrophism is an integral part of uniformitarianism.

Uniformitarianism says that the observed systems of today are responsible for the deposition of sediments in the past. Since we observe slow depositions of less than one inch per year, and since we observe these hurricane/flood systems, they are all part of uniformitarianism. Thus, while catastrophism can explain minor events causing several feet of sediment in one day, it cannot account for the other slow processes, such as deposition of carbonate rocks (see Chalk Layers, [www.answersincreation.org/nochalk.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/nochalk.htm)) or desert sandstones (see Desert Problem, [www.answersincreation.org/desertproblem.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/desertproblem.htm)). For more, see Catastrophism ([www.answersincreation.org/catastrophism.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/catastrophism.htm)).

MacArthur makes the claim "Catastrophism therefore poses a major challenge to the evolutionary timetable." Nothing could be further from the truth. He gives no credible model, and neither does Answers in Genesis or the Institute for Creation Research, for catastrophism to work on a worldwide scale. For an example of how unworkable their model is, read their explanation for the Coconino Sandstone ([www.answersincreation.org/coconino.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/coconino.htm)).

In the next paragraph, he states, "But a moment's reflection will reveal that the fossil record is impossible to explain by any uniformitarian scheme." This is another outright falsehood. You would say this if you were influenced by years of young earth belief. In reality, catastrophism cannot explain the fossil distribution. He mentions fossilization requires rapid burial...I agree. But with catastrophic forces at work within uniformitarianism, this has happened many times over millions of years. He also mentions fossil graveyards with thousands of fossils, again a product of flood events that occurred millions of years ago, and all within a uniformitarian framework. He throws a quick statement about marine fossils being found on mountaintops, again easily explained through plate tectonics (which he doesn't even address).

Next he erroneously uses II Peter 3:4-6 to support the idea that the Bible denounces uniformitarianism. This passage on the flood does address creation, but not the creative forces behind that creation. It mentions the flood, and destroying the known world, but reading into the passage that it denounces uniformitarianism is an addition to the scripture that is not there. It is a further example of a young earth creationist adding to the words of scripture to support their position. At face value, this passage does nothing for young earth creationism.

Next he claims that some rock features cannot be explained by uniformitarianism. He mentions the Vasquez Rocks, near where he lives, that were formed by catastrophic forces. You see here once again the ignorant approach of young earth creationists. I'll say it again...catastrophic events are a part of uniformitarianism! Although the Vasquez Rocks may have been formed by catastrophe, they are still a part of the uniformitarianist system. A rock formation which formed by catastrophic processes does not provide any evidence of a young earth!

Next he mentions the Grand Canyon, and says the catastrophic formation of it makes more sense than a uniformitarian explanation. This is thoroughly disproved in scientific literature. The foundation work for young earth creationists concerning the Canyon is a book called Grand Canyon: Monument to Catastrophe. This book has been reviewed on this website and has been shown to be nothing more than scientific trash. To read more about the Grand Canyon, check out the Grand Canyon page ([www.answersincreation.org/grandcanyon.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/grandcanyon.htm)).

MacArthur gives an example of a canyon in Georgia that formed over the last 160 years. This is similar to the Burlingame Canyon argument ([www.answersincreation.org/burlingame.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/burlingame.htm)), and is like comparing apples and oranges.

Passing mention is made in a quote about Mount Saint Helens. Again, this is a catastrophic event, within a uniformitarian framework, and presents no problems for evolution or old age belief. He closes this section by stating "To imagine that the earth was formed by natural processes over billions and billions of years through slow and steady evolution is to deny the very essence of what Scripture teaches about the earth's creation. It is to reject the clear account of God Himself that He created the earth and all its life in six days." Catastrophic events, happening in uniformitarianism, is a "natural processes," and offers perfect explanation for what we see in the rock record over a period of billions of years. Despite the ramblings of MacArthur, he has provided no valid arguments for a young earth, but he continues to successfully edify the young earth reader through his emotional appeals.

## **Which Came First - The Chicken or the Egg? (Page 54)**

This section has no bearing on the progressive creationist, as they believe God created out of nothing. The key to this section is the idea of God creating things with the "appearance of age." More on that later. He devotes several paragraphs on the issue of Adam having a bellybutton, and fortunately he reaches a good conclusion, in that this is mere speculation, and not important. He goes on to discuss light created in transit, so that we can see it even though it is billions of light years away. We will discuss this further in Chapter 5.

On the appearance of age issue, there are several things to consider here. First, using fiat, or out of nothing instantaneous creation, one would have to assume that the things being created had an appearance of age. Note I said "assumed." In reality, there is nothing in the Bible account of creation that indicates Adam's age...we are merely told that God made him. Since no claim is made, the apparent problem of fiat creation can be explained by the theistic evolutionists.

According to Big Bang cosmology, it all started from a speck of dust, if you will, and the Big Bang exploded, filling the universe. Thus, going back to the beginning, God did create the universe from apparent nothingness. Thus Adam, who came along billions of years later, if you go all the way back, came out of nothing. This is a stretch, to be sure, but one that many are willing to make.

Now, let's consider the moral implications of "apparent age." Consider supernova explosions, which have been observed by astronomers. The light coming from these explosions have in some cases traveled millions of light years. Thus, if the light was created in transit, when we watch a supernova from millions of light years away, we are observing an event that never occurred. Why would God create evidence of an event that never occurred? In essence, to accept apparent age for the light waves of our universe is the same thing as saying God is a liar, because He created evidence of an event that never occurred. I for one am not willing to call God a liar, but young earth creationists are in many cases eager to do so.

## **Should We Appraise Scripture By Science, or Vice Versa? (Page 57)**

In this section, MacArthur launches an attack upon Dr. Hugh Ross, founder of Reasons to Believe. His progressive creationist views receive the most attention from young earth creationists, indicating their fear of his ideas (I think they realize that he is onto something that is correct, and threatens the young earth dynasty). It is interesting to note, that before MacArthur published his book, Dr. Ross contacted him, requesting an interview to clear up misconceptions that MacArthur had about Ross. MacArthur refused to meet with Ross. For MacArthur, it would have been the perfect opportunity to confront what he believes is gross errors in interpreting the creation story, but for some reason, MacArthur was afraid to meet him.

Of Ross, MacArthur says "...he makes Scripture subservient to science--and he does so without carefully separating scientific fact from scientific theory." How would MacArthur know, since he is no scientist, what is "fact" and what is "theory?" He gets his scientific information from other young earth creationists, who are themselves unreliable when it comes to scientific data (see Creation Scientists,

[www.answersincreation.org/scientist.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/scientist.htm)). In reality, scientists, and Dr. Ross, are very meticulous in their work, and know quite well the difference between theory and fact.

The problem isn't whether or not some things are theories and some facts...the real issue is if the scientific facts proposed by Ross are unchallenged, they directly contradict young earth creationism, and present a real threat to their dynasty. Young earth creationist organizations want their followers to approach science with the assumption that the earth is young, and then try to interpret the data so that it fits a young earth model...unfortunately for him, this method utterly fails when tested. Ross actually "thinks about creation," rather than blindly accepting the words of others. YEC organizations are fearful that their followers will begin to think for themselves.

On page 58, he launches an attack upon the Big Bang, alluding to the fact that even many astronomers consider it controversial. However, the Big Bang is testable, and it proves itself over and over again (see Putting the Big Bang to the Test ([http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/big\\_bang\\_evidences.shtml](http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/big_bang_evidences.shtml)); also see The Creator and the Cosmos, book by Dr. Ross).

He then goes on to attack the order of creation. MacArthur believes plant creation on day Three, and then insects on Day Six, will not work in Ross' view, since insects are needed to pollinate the plants. This shows MacArthur does not understand Ross' view, and he would do well to study it more closely. Maybe it would have been a good idea for him to have met with Ross before publishing the book! To understand more on the order of creation, see Genesis 1 ([www.answersincreation.org/genesis1.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/genesis1.htm)).

Finally, MacArthur makes a big deal out of Ross' view of the importance of general revelation. He quotes Ross as saying truth is information that is free of contradiction, and one truth cannot be called superior to another truth. Concerning this, MacArthur says "Ross clearly does believe "that God's revelation through nature is...on an equal footing with His revelation through the words of the Bible."" There is no problem for Ross or anyone else to hold this view. We accept the Scriptures as truth. We also accept scientific facts as truth. Since both are truth, they cannot contradict each other. If there is a problem, then our interpretation of either the science or the Scripture is wrong, and must be evaluated. MacArthur's real problem is that Ross interprets Scripture differently than he does.

Think of it this way. If you are a jurist in a murder trial, would you want to see all of the evidence? You cannot in good conscience convict a person unless you consider all the evidence. Thanks to Morton's Demon ([www.answersincreation.org/mortond.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/mortond.htm)), most young earth creationists do not examine all the evidence...instead they implicitly trust Answers in Genesis and others, not even investigating the facts. Young earth creationists refuse to even consider evidence that the earth is old...they ignore the truths of science in favor of their narrow-minded young earth view.

Yes, Ross does interpret the Scriptures differently...but the Bible encourages us all to examine the Scriptures, so there is nothing wrong with this. Ross' view of "nature" does not conflict with his interpretation of Scripture...and that is why he is targeted by the young earthers. They rightly recognize his view as valid, and see it as a threat to their dynasty. They are losing this battle in the churches, and they realize this.

## **Is General Revelation Equal to Special Revelation? (Page 60)**

On page 61, MacArthur makes the claim that "Jesus himself expressly debunked the notion that nature and Scripture are equivalent forms of revelation when He said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away"" (referring to Matthew 24:35). Here MacArthur is reading more into Jesus' words than are actually there. Just because heaven and earth pass away, it does not mean that what we see in heaven and earth are not truthful! Jesus is in no way making a statement about the truthfulness of general revelation!

Ross' words still ring true, despite the ramblings of MacArthur. What we see in creation (general revelation) is the work of God's hands, and what we see in the Scriptures is the inspired Word of God. Both come from God, and both represent truth. Two truths cannot contradict one another. It's not a matter of Ross elevating general revelation up to an equal footing with Scripture...it is a matter of two truths which cannot contradict. In essence, MacArthur is right in that we progressive creationists elevate general revelation...but there are no sound reason, especially from the Bible itself, that would prevent this. Since both are truth, they should both be examined with an open mind.

## **Is the Universe Young or Old? (Page 62)**

MacArthur uses the argument of Archbishop Ussher, who calculated that Adam's creation was in 4,004 B.C. He then discusses genealogies, and how there could be no possible way to stretch the genealogies to include thousands of years of missing information. He quotes Henry Morris of the Institute for Creation Research as support.

He gives no valid arguments that would argue against these gaps in the genealogies. Henry Morris, as we all know, is extremely biased, and cannot be trusted to objectively look at the data. We know of demonstratable gaps in the genealogies, therefore there is no reason why they cannot contain large gaps.

Think of it this way. God decided what to put in the Bible. We have excellent stories in the Bible that address many issues. No doubt, there were many God-fearing Jews of the Old Testament that are not mentioned. The fact that millions of missing testimonies from the Old Testament should not concern us; God picked the relevant information that He wanted to include, and left out the rest. For the genealogies that are missing, it was God's decision that it was not significant to be included in His Word. If he had included a detailed listing of all activity prior to Jesus Christ, the Bible would probably be the size of the Library of Congress itself!

We should not concern ourselves with what is missing, but instead should focus on what we have.

MacArthur then talks briefly about the days of creation being long epochs. He says there is nothing in the context of Genesis to suggest they are to be interpreted figuratively. That's good, especially since Ross takes Genesis literally. Then he claims that the order of creation itself rules out the possibility of the days being long ages. Actually, we old earth creationists realize that the order of creation is fully supported by the Genesis account. Perhaps if MacArthur had met with Ross, he would have

understood this...instead he speaks from his ignorance of old earth belief. For more, see Genesis 1 ([www.answersincreation.org/genesis1.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/genesis1.htm)).

At the bottom of page 64, he says "The argument seems to suggest that God could not possibly have created such an intricate universe in only six days' time." This is essentially the "weak God" argument. Saying that God could not create in six days is irrelevant. For that matter, why didn't God take six seconds...six days is too long!

One argument I like to use is...Can you do it? Starting right now, I'll give you 15 billion years. Your task is to create a fully functioning universe, with a planet full of life. No, you cannot do it...only God can. In this scenario, time is irrelevant. The only thing that matters is the ability of the creator. God can do it...you can't. It really doesn't matter how long He took...that's not the issue.

Of long ages, MacArthur says "Only by denying key expressions or interpreting them in a nonliteral sense can the Christian read any degree of evolution or "progressive creation" into the Genesis account." Not true...progressive creationists, and many theistic evolutionists, accept the creation account in a literal sense, without denying any expressions at all!

The entire chapter could be characterized as an emotional appeal. With much mudslinging, he rallies the young earth believer against old earth creationism, but in all cases it is with false information. MacArthur has a bad understanding of progressive creationism, and his refusal to meet with Dr. Ross speaks volumes about his attitude. The fact of the matter is young earth creationists are losing the battle in America's churches, as more and more people realize the earth is old. Their fear of Ross, and old earth creationism, is driving them to personal attacks upon Ross and others. Like a cornered raccoon, they come out fighting...however, there's no escape for the raccoon. He will soon go away, just like geocentricity.