

A deep space photograph of a starry night sky. The background is dark black, filled with numerous stars of varying colors (white, yellow, blue) and sizes. Several prominent bright stars have distinct four-pointed diffraction patterns. In the lower right, a bright yellow star is particularly large and bright. In the upper center, another bright yellow star is visible. A faint, blue, spiral galaxy is visible in the upper right quadrant. Other smaller, fainter galaxies and star clusters are scattered throughout the field of view.

Science and the Bible:  
Young-earth Creationism

# Agenda

- Define Young Earth Creationism
- Apply the two-fold test:
  - How comfortably does it live with the truth claims of theology?
  - How comfortably does it live with the truth claims of science?
- Perspective

# Defining Young Earth Creationism

# Distinguishing Features

- The traditional view
- Prosaic exegesis of scripture
- Historical reliability of the Genesis accounts
- Suspicion of science

# Exegetical Method

- Prosaic exegesis vs.:
  - Poetic exegesis (symbolic or stylistic)
  - Polemic exegesis (theological argument)
- Prosaic does not mean literalistic
- Ordinary language
- Straightforward

# Historicity

- Universal vs. culture bound truths
- Real people and events
  - Six-day creation
  - Adam and Eve
  - The Fall and Curse
  - Noah's Flood as a global event
  - Tower of Babel

# Jesus on Historicity

- Matthew 24:37-40 “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the Flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. There will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left.”

# Suspicious of Science

- Suspicion does not mean rejection of science
- Rather, true science would agree with Scripture
- Thus, rejects as faulty science the findings of science that conflict with scripture
- Interpretation of the facts vs. the facts themselves
- Must create an alternative explanation



# “Six Fundamentals”

- Ted Peters and Martinez Hewlett, *Evolution from Creation to New Creation*
- Theistic evolutionists

# First “Fundamental”

“The sudden creation of the cosmos from nothing by divine action.” (page 79)

- This belief (in *Creation ex nihilo*) does not distinguish young earth or old earth creationists from all other Christians
- What distinguishes is the insistence that “creation was mature from its birth.” (80)

# Second “Fundamental”

- “The insufficiency of mutation and natural selection to explain development of all living kinds from a single point of origin.” (81)
- Creationists affirm both natural selection and evolution.
  - Confine evolution to “microevolution.”
  - E.g. the pepper moth

# Third “Fundamental”

Changes occur only within fixed limits of originally created kinds of plants and animals.”  
(82)

- However, they mistakenly accuse young earth creationists of restricting evolution within species, a narrower understanding than they actually have

# Fourth Fundamental

Apes and humans have separate ancestry.

# Fifth Fundamental

“Earth’s geology is explained by catastrophism, including a worldwide flood.” (84)

- Accept the “facts of nature” but dispute the interpretation of those facts.
- Dispute geological uniformitarianism.
- Are proposing Flood Geology as an alternative.

# Sixth Fundamental

“A young earth, less than ten thousand years old.” (85)

- Reject Big Bang cosmology
- Appeal to the Second Law of Thermodynamics
- Allows for a young and mature universe
- Must deal with the appearance of great age

# What About the Age of the Earth?

- How essential is the young universe to the young-earth creation position?
- What's at stake?
- That is, what would be lost if the universe were actually old and not young?



# Peters and Hewitt

“Young earth creationists do not feel compelled to defend a young earth; but they do so anyway. The question of evolution can be distinguished from the question of the geological age of the earth.

Whereas ‘the concept of evolution does suggest an *old* earth,’ writes Henry Morris, “Creationism is free to consider *all* evidences regarding the earth’s age, whether old or young.’ Darwinists are stuck with an old earth, while creationists have the option of young or old.” (85)

# **WHY SO MUCH EFFORT TO ESTABLISH FLOOD GEOLOGY ...**

when it's not even a point of  
discussion among secular  
geologists?

# **WHY SO MUCH EFFORT TO ESTABLISH FLOOD GEOLOGY ...**

when it's only a point of  
discussion among Evangelical  
Christians?

# Because Evangelicals Believe That...

- Truth matters.
- All truth is God's truth.
- The Bible is inspired, inerrant and timeless truth.
  - “Your word is truth.” (John 17:17)
  - “God cannot lie.” (Titus 1:2)
- God's acts are historical acts.

# Because ...

- The Bible, taken at face value, portrays Noah's Flood:
  - As a global event.
  - As a catastrophic event.
  - As an historical event.
- Science contradicts this understanding of the Flood.
  - It was certainly not global.
  - It was certainly not catastrophic.
  - It was probably not even historical.

# The Crisis for Evangelicals

- The issue: How does one reconcile these radically different accounts?
- Two questions of interpretation:
  - Was the Flood an historical event, or merely a symbolic one?
  - Was the Flood global in scope, or local?

# An Historical Event

The details given in the Flood account (Genesis 6-9) clearly imply that it is an historical event. E.g.:

- The details of the Ark (6:14-16).
  - Type of wood.
  - Multiple rooms.
  - Covered with pitch inside and out.
  - Length, width, height and shape.
- The details of the Flood. E.g.:
  - Stages, and duration of each stage.
  - Mechanism.
  - Extent.

# An Historical Event

The New Testament treats it as an historical event.

- 1 Peter 3:20 “When the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is eight persons, were brought safely through the water.”
- 2 Peter 3:5-6 “For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.”



# An Historical Event

- Jesus treated it as an historical event.
- Matthew 24:37-40 “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the Flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. There will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left.”

# It Was a Global Event

- Genesis 6:17 “Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood water on the earth, **to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.**”
- Genesis 7:4 “I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and **I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.**”
- Genesis 7:19 “The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so **that all the high mountains everywhere were covered.** The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.”

# It Was a Global Event

- Genesis 7:23 “Thus He blotted out **every living thing** that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and **only Noah was left**, together with those that were with him in the ark.”
- A local flood could not “prevail upon the earth” for 150 days (Genesis 7:24).
- There is absolutely **nothing** in the Flood account that even hints at a merely local Flood!

# The Local Flood View

- The majority of scholars hold that science's account is either true or is extremely close to the truth.
- Accordingly:
  - It must be accepted as fact ("truth").
  - It is not open to significant revision.
  - The Bible must be reinterpreted.
- "Nor can an observed uniformity be connected with the Flood by a strict scientific observation. The judgments of the Flood and the curse are parts of the hypothesis supplied by biblical revelation." Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest, *Integrative Theology* Vol 2., p 45.

# The Global Flood View

- Scientific theories are always provisional, yet they are allowed to trump scripture. Why is this????
- The local Flood causes several theological problems.
  - The credibility problem: How can an historical Flood sufficient to destroy all mankind **not** leave an imprint?
  - A local Flood trivializes ...
    - God's judgment of sin.
    - Christ's redemption.

# The Global Flood View

- “That the canyon’s origin is a mystery may come as a surprise to those who know that geologists speak with confidence about certain aspects of our planet’s ancient history and the life-forms that once lived here ... Yet even today, there remain competing theories about how the Grand Canyon may have formed. How can one of the most treasured landscapes on Earth defy a unifying theory regarding its formation?” Wayne Ranney, *Carving the Grand Canyon*, 2.