

## JESUS, EVANGELICAL SCHOLARS, AND THE AGE OF THE EARTH

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*In disputes about the age of the earth, young-earth creationists contend for a literal six-day creation 6,000–10,000 years ago and a global flood, but old-earth creationists advocate theistic evolution or progressive creation over millions of years and, many times, a local flood. Jesus understood the OT to be historically accurate in its description of historical events, including His teaching on the age of the earth. Specifically, in three “Jesus AGE verses,” He demonstrated His young earth viewpoint in Mark 10:6, Mark 13:19-20, and Luke 11:50-51. When analyzed carefully, “from the beginning of creation” in Mark 10:6 refers to the beginning of the whole creation, not just the creation of the first marriage on day 6 of Genesis 1:27-30. In Mark 13:19, “since the beginning of creation which God created” refers not to the beginning of the human race but to the beginning of the whole creation, starting in Gen 1:1. Luke 11:50-51 focuses on “since the foundation of the world” and refers to the whole creation week of Genesis 1, not just a portion of it. A number of young-earth creationists have referred to these verses to prove that Jesus was a young-earth advocate, but old-earth defenders have usually ignored them. A survey of commentaries on Genesis, systematic theology texts, popular-level books, and scholarly works demonstrates this trend. Nothing in the Gospels supports the idea that Jesus viewed man as being created long ages after the beginning of creation.*

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### Introduction

For several decades, a growing controversy within the church about the age of the earth has existed. Young-earth creationists have argued for a literal six-day

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creation 6,000–10,000 years ago and a global flood.<sup>1</sup> In opposition, various kinds of old-earth creationists have advocated theistic evolution or progressive creationism over millions of years, with many of them also arguing for a local flood at the time of Noah.<sup>2</sup> The old-earth views have dominated the church since the early nineteenth century,<sup>3</sup> whereas the young-earth view was almost the universal belief of the church in the first eighteen centuries.

What does Jesus have to say about the age of the earth? That surely should be important to all Christians and a determining factor in their belief on the subject. For Jesus, the Word of God was the bread of life, without which no man could live (Matt 4:4). He taught that those who hear His words and act upon them are like a wise man who built his house on a solid rock (Matt 7:24-27). As Ravi Zacharias correctly observes in his book against atheism, “Jesus claimed to be ‘the truth.’ Let us test His claims and teachings. If they are true, what He says matters more than anything else in life.”<sup>4</sup> About Jesus, the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy similarly declares, “His words were crucially important; for He was God, He spoke from the Father, and His words will judge all men at the last day.” The ICBI scholars added, “[T]he authority of Christ and that of Scripture are one,” and “[A]s He bowed to His Father’s instruction given in His Bible (our Old Testament), so He requires His disciples to do.”<sup>5</sup> Following the teaching and example of the Lord Jesus Christ, every Christian should conform his beliefs, teachings, and behavior to the inspired, inerrant, authoritative Word of God.

Many Christians, even Christian scholars, seem to be unaware that Jesus taught about the age of the earth. Before a discussion of those teachings, a brief examination of what Jesus said about Scripture generally and Genesis 1–11 in particular will shed light on how He interpreted the early chapters of the Bible. Next, an examination of a number of the writings of young-earth and old-earth scholars to see how they deal with the teachings of Jesus on the subject will show clearly that Jesus was a young-earth creationist and that if anyone calls Him Lord, he should

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<sup>1</sup>The difference depends on whether or not there are gaps in the Genesis 5 and 11 genealogies. I reject gaps for reasons expressed in Travis R. Freeman, “A New Look at the Genesis 5 and 11 Fluidity Problem,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 42 (Autumn 2004):259-86, and his Ph.D. thesis (1998, SWBTS), “The Chronological Value of Genesis 5 and 11 in Light of Recent Biblical Investigation,” and in Jonathan Sarfati, “Biblical Chronogenealogies,” *TJ* 17/3 (December 2003):14-18, Online at [www.answeringgenesis.org/tj/v17/i3/chronogenealogies.asp](http://www.answeringgenesis.org/tj/v17/i3/chronogenealogies.asp), accessed 12/26/06.

<sup>2</sup>Old-earth creationists (including theistic evolutionists) accept the secular estimate of the age of the universe (about 15 billion years) and of the earth (about 4.5 billion years).

<sup>3</sup>See Terry Mortenson, *The Great Turning Point: The Church's Catastrophic Mistake on Geology—Before Darwin* (Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books, 2004) 25-36.

<sup>4</sup>Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live Without God?* (Nashville: W Publishing, 1994) 131.

<sup>5</sup>Norman L. Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) 499-500. The ICBI statement is reproduced in full in that volume.

follow Him, rather than the contemporary scientific majority, many of whom are not believers.

### Jesus' View of Scripture

In John 10:34-35 Jesus defended His claim to deity by quoting from Ps 82:6 and then asserting that "Scripture cannot be broken." That is, the Bible is reliable and truthful. The Scriptures cannot be contradicted. In Luke 24:25-27 Jesus rebuked His disciples for not believing all that the prophets have spoken (which He equates with "all the Scriptures"). So, in Jesus' view, all Scripture is trustworthy and should be believed.

Another way that Jesus revealed His complete trust in the Scriptures was by treating as historical fact the accounts in the OT which most contemporary people think are unbelievable mythology. Those historical accounts include Adam and Eve as the first married couple (Matt 19:3-6; Mark 10:3-9), Abel as the first prophet who was martyred (Luke 11:50-51), Noah and the Flood (Matt 24:38-39), Moses and the serpent (John 3:14), Moses and the manna (John 6:32-33, 49), the experiences of Lot and his wife (Luke 17:28-32), the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt 10:15), the miracles of Elijah (Luke 4:25-27), and Jonah and the big fish (Matt 12:40-41). As Wenham has compellingly argued,<sup>6</sup> Jesus did not allegorize the accounts but took them as straightforward history, describing events that actually happened just as the OT describes. Jesus used these records to teach His disciples that His death, resurrection, and second coming would likewise certainly happen in time-space reality.

All the above-mentioned statements reflect some aspect of Jesus' attitude toward or belief about the Scriptures. But far more frequently Jesus reveals his conviction about the authority of Scripture. Its authority is shown in the way Jesus used the OT. He constantly quoted it as a basis for His own teaching on such things as church discipline (Matt 18:16), marriage (Matt. 19:3-9), God's requirements for eternal life (Matt 19:16-19), the greatest commandment (Matt. 22:37-39), and the fact that He would cause family divisions (Matt 10:35-36). He used it as His justification for cleansing the temple (Matt 21:12-17) and for His disciples picking grain on the Sabbath (Luke 6:3-4). It is the "weapon" He used in responding to Satan's temptations (Matt 4:1-10). And in a totally unambiguous manner, He stated that the OT sits in judgment over all the man-made traditions and ideas of public consensus (Matt 15:1-9). Jesus knew of nothing higher than Scripture to which one can appeal as a source of truth and divine standards for what is to be believed and obeyed (Mark 7:5-13). The thoughts of men are nothing compared to the commandments and testimonies of God. It is a very serious error, according to Jesus, to set them aside in order to submit to some other alleged source of truth, whether natural or supernatural.

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<sup>6</sup>John Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1973) 11-37.

Evidence is nonexistent that Jesus dissected the OT and trusted only the so-called theological, moral, or religious portions. For Him all the Scriptures were trustworthy truth, down to the last jot (Matt 5:18). Nor does He ever appeal to some higher authority to bring out some “hidden meaning” of Scripture. Also, Jesus indicates that the Scriptures are essentially perspicuous: eleven times the Gospel writers record Him saying, “Have you not read ...?”<sup>7</sup> and thirty times He defended His teaching by saying, “It is written.”<sup>8</sup> He rebuked His listeners for not understanding and believing what the text plainly says.

Jesus boldly confronted all kinds of wrong thinking and behavior in His listeners’ lives, in spite of the threat of persecution for doing so. Even His enemies said, “Teacher, we know that you are truthful, and defer to no one; for you are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth” (Mark 12:14).<sup>9</sup> As Wenham has cogently argued, Jesus never adapted His teachings to the common, but ignorant and mistaken, beliefs of His audiences.<sup>10</sup> Jesus knew the difference between parables and history and between the traditions of men and the truth of God’s Word (Mark 7:8-13). He spoke in truth (Luke 4:25), because He was and is the truth (John 14:6), and frequently, He emphasized His truthfulness with “Truly, truly I say ...” (e.g., John 3:3). He also explained that believing what He said about earthly, time-space reality was the ground for believing what He said about heavenly realities, such as eternal life, forgiveness of sin, and spiritual rebirth (John 3:12). In other words, if we do not believe what He said about things we *can* verify, how can we legitimately believe what He says about the things we *cannot* verify? He also said that believing the writings of Moses was foundational to believing His words (John 5:45-47). Jesus (like all the apostles and prophets) clearly viewed the Bible’s history as foundational to its theology and morality.

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<sup>7</sup>In these instances Jesus referred to Genesis 1–2; Exodus 3–6; 1 Sam 21:6; Pss 8:2; 118:22 to unspecified Levitical law—in other words, to passages from the historical narrative, the law and the poetry of Scripture.

<sup>8</sup>Passages He specifically cited were from all five books of the Pentateuch, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah and Malachi. Interestingly, in the temptation of Jesus, Satan used Scripture literally and, in response, Jesus did not imply that the literal interpretation of Satan was wrong, but rather corrected Satan’s *misapplication* of the text’s literal meaning by quoting another text, which He took literally (cf. Matt 4:6-7).

<sup>9</sup>Scripture quotations throughout this article are from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

<sup>10</sup>John Wenham, “Christ’s View of Scripture,” in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) 14-15.

### Jesus' Teaching on the Age of the Earth

Besides the above-mentioned evidence that Jesus took Genesis 1–11 as straightforward and reliable history, the Gospel writers record several statements that Jesus made, which are relevant to the age of the earth. Those verses, hereafter collectively referred to as the “Jesus AGE verses,” show that Jesus was a young-earth creationist. They are:

1. “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female” (Mark 10:6).
2. “For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will. Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days” (Mark 13:19-20).
3. “... so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation” (Luke 11:50-51).

The key phrases that attract attention in these verses are “from (or since) the beginning of creation” and “since the foundation of the world.” Old-earth advocates who interact with these verses contend that in them Jesus is not referring to the beginning of the whole creation but only to the beginning of the human race, which they date millions of years after the creation of the universe, earth, trilobites, dinosaurs, etc. In what follows will come exegetical arguments for concluding that Jesus is referring to the beginning of the world (Gen 1:1) in these verses. Then will come interaction with the writings of a few old-earth proponents who have discussed the relationship of the verses to the age of the earth.

1. *Mark 10:6*: “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.” Commentators agree that Jesus quoted from Genesis 1–2, so the “male and female” He refers to are Adam and Eve. Jesus says they were “from the beginning of creation” (ajpo; ... ajrch' " ktivsew"). To what does that phrase refer—to the creation of Adam and Eve or to the beginning of creation in Gen 1:1?

Besides its use in Mark 10:6, “from the beginning of creation” (ajpo; ... ajrch' " ktivsew") appears in Mark 13:19 and 2 Pet 3:4. In 2 Pet 3:4, Peter writes about the past and the future of the heavens and the earth, not simply of humanity. His reference to the beginning of creation must, therefore, be equally cosmic in extent. In a similar phrase in Rev 3:14 Jesus says that He is “the beginning (or ruler) of the creation” (hJ ajrch; th' " ktivsew"), which certainly

applies to all of creation.<sup>11</sup>

The phrase “from the beginning” (αἰπό; ἀρχή) occurs 20 times in the NT. Of those 20 uses, five have the initiation point of the cosmos in view. Never is it a clear reference to the beginning of the human race. It appears three times in 1 John 1:1 and 2:13-14. Comparing the language of those two passages to John 1:1-3 (which uses ἐν ἀρχῇ, “in the beginning”) shows that John refers to the beginning of creation (not merely the beginning of the human race), for he speaks of Christ being in or from the beginning and the Creator of all things. The phrase also appears in Matt 19:4, 8; John 8:44; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 John 3:8. Matthew 19:4-8 is parallel to the account in Mark 10, so the similar phrases must have the same meaning. John 8:44 and 1 John 3:8 speak about Satan and teach that he has sinned, lied, and murdered from the beginning. This undoubtedly refers to his fall, his deception of Eve and his behind-the-scenes influence in Cain’s killing of Abel. Since we do not know exactly when Satan fell (except that it was before he tempted Eve), these two verses by themselves are too vague either to support or oppose clearly the view that “from the beginning” refers to the beginning of creation. Yet nothing in the context restricts the meaning only to the beginning of the human race. Because of Paul’s comment on divine election in Eph 1:4 (that God chose us “before the foundation of the world”), to conclude that in 2 Thess 2:13 he is referring to the same beginning of the whole creation is most reasonable. That he has merely the beginning of the human race in mind here seems unlikely. Hebrews 1:10 contains the phrase κατ’ ἀρχαί, which is translated “in the beginning” in frequently used translations.<sup>12</sup> Since, according to the rest of the verse, that is when the earth was founded or established and the heavens were made, the beginning refers to the events of the whole creation week. All other uses of “from (or in) the beginning” are irrelevant to the present discussion, for the context shows that the phrase in these cases refers to the beginning of the Scriptures (i.e., the time of Moses), the first hearing of the gospel by some people in the first century, the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry, or the beginning of Paul’s life or ministry. Never does it mean the beginning of the human race.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>See David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, vol 52A of Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1997) 256, for the different interpretations of ἀρχή here. Either way the phrase refers to all of creation, which is consistent with the meaning of the other similar phrases.

<sup>12</sup>KJV, NKJV, NIV, NASB, ESV, NLT, RSV, and HCSB.

<sup>13</sup>First John 2:7 is referring either to the beginning of the Scriptures (i.e., the time of Moses) or more likely to the time when John’s initial readers first heard the apostles’ preaching or believed the gospel. Likewise, 1 John 2:24, 3:11 and 2 John 5-6 refer to when John’s readers became Christians. Luke 1:2 refers to the disciples at the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry. John 6:64 refers to either the beginning of Jesus’ ministry or, less likely, to the beginning of the creation, so the verse is either irrelevant to this discussion or confirms the young-earth view. John 6:25; 15:27; 16:4 are referring to the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. Philippians 4:15 refers to the beginning of Paul’s preaching in Philippi. Acts 26:4 refers to the beginning of Paul’s life.

This discussion shows that the phrase in Mark 10:6, “from the beginning of creation,” refers—in Jesus’ way of thinking—to the beginning of the whole creation, encompassing the whole creation period described in Genesis 1. Jesus was not referring merely to the creation of the first marriage on day six.

2. *Mark 13:19*: “For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will. Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.” Like Mark 10:6, this verse uses ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς κτίσεως. But in 13:19 the phrase is modified by “which God created” (ἣν ἐκτίσεν ὁ θεός;”). The relative pronoun is feminine, so the clause modifies one of the feminine nouns, “creation” or “beginning.” Jesus would hardly have said that God “created the beginning.” Such wording is not used elsewhere in Scripture, and why Jesus would emphasize such a point is difficult to explain. Also, the closest antecedent of “which” is “creation.” Furthermore, Rom 1:18-20 indicates that sinners deny that God is the *Creator*, not the *beginning* of the physical world. So surely Jesus means the “creation, which God created,” with “creation” referring to the whole of creation week during which God created, not just to the creation of Adam and Eve.

Another support for this conclusion is that in Mark 13:19 Jesus describes a time-line: from the beginning of creation until now and on to the end of the present cosmos (v. 20), when heaven and earth will pass away (v. 31). Mark 13:24-26, 13:30-32, and Matt 24:14, 37-39 show clearly that Jesus predicts that the present human experience and the present cosmos will end at essentially the same time (cf. 2 Peter 3). Together, these verses support the notion that humanity and the rest of creation also began at essentially the same time in the past. Since the suffering under consideration is human (not animal) suffering, there must have been humans at the beginning of creation in order for Jesus’ time-line to make sense. If there were no humans in existence from the beginning of creation (supposedly billions of years ago) until the relatively recent past, what would be the point of saying there will be a time of human suffering unsurpassed by any other human suffering since the beginning of the cosmos (when no humans existed, according to old-earthers) until the very end? Jesus could have easily said “since the creation of man until now” or “since Adam,” if that is what He meant. His choice of words reflects His belief that man was there at the beginning and human suffering commenced essentially at the beginning of creation, not billions of years after the beginning. His Jewish listeners would have assumed this meaning in Jesus’ words, for Josephus’s history of the Jewish people indicates that the Jews of his day believed that both the first day of creation and

Adam's creation were about 5,000 years before Christ.<sup>14</sup>

Since Matt 24:21 is parallel to Mark 13:19, Matthew's wording "since the beginning of the world" (ajp j ajrch' " kovsmou) must have the same meaning, with both accounts accurately reflecting what Jesus meant. Though KOVSMO" (*kosmos*) sometimes refers to this sinful worldly system of man,<sup>15</sup> it often refers to the whole creation,<sup>16</sup> as in Matt 24:21.

The foregoing evidence demonstrates the Jesus and NT writers never use the phrase ajp j ajrch' " to mean "beginning of the human race." Most instances that refer to the ancient past mean the beginning of the whole creation starting in Gen 1:1, thus supporting the young-earth interpretation of Mark 10:6 and 13:19.

An analysis of the commentary literature on Mark 10:6 and 13:19 yields four views of the phrases relevant to this study. Gundry and Morgan take the phrase in 10:6 to refer to the beginning of the whole creation (not merely the beginning of the human race or the beginning of marriage).<sup>17</sup> Cranfield says the phrase in 10:6 does not necessarily mean the beginning of Genesis or the creation narrative, but he gives no justification for his view.<sup>18</sup> McKenna, Evans, and Wessel say the phrases refer to the beginning of human history, but present no argument for their conclusion.<sup>19</sup> France asserts simply that the phrase in 10:6 refers to the period before the Fall.<sup>20</sup>

Garland, Lenski, Cole, Gould, Lane, Hare, Edwards, Hendricksen, Brooks, and Moule make no comment on these verses, or at least not on the phrases related to the age of the earth, or their comments are too vague to determine what they

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<sup>14</sup>*The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1987) 850, and Paul James-Griffiths, "Creation Days and Orthodox Jewish Tradition," *Creation* 26/2 (March 2004):53-55, online at [www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v26/i2/tradition.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v26/i2/tradition.asp), accessed 12/26/06.

<sup>15</sup>E.g., John 15:18-19; 16:33; 17:6, 14, 21; 1 John 2:15-17.

<sup>16</sup>E.g., Luke 9:25; John 1:10 (first two uses, cf. 1:3—Jesus created the earth, not the sinful system of man); 13:1 (cf. 6:38; 13:3; 16:28—Jesus was not just leaving the sinful world of humanity to be a hermit in the wilderness, but leaving the world of time-space physical creation to return to the Father in heaven); John 17:5, 24; Acts 17:24.

<sup>17</sup>Robert H. Gundry, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993). G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to Mark* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1927). Neither gives a comment on 13:19.

<sup>18</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St Mark*. Cambridge Greek Testament (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1959). He makes no comment on 13:19.

<sup>19</sup>David L. McKenna, *The Communicator's Commentary: Mark* (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1982); Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001); Walter W. Wessel, "Mark," in vol. 8 of *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

<sup>20</sup>R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). He makes no comment on 13:19.

believe regarding the issue under discussion.<sup>21</sup>

That a highly respected Greek lexicon in its entries for *ajrchv* and *ktivsi* concurs with the young-earth interpretation of Mark 10:6 and 13:19 is noteworthy (especially since the compilers are not evangelicals).<sup>22</sup>

3. *Luke 11:50-51*: "... so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation." This statement of Jesus contains the phrase "foundation of the world." The phrase occurs ten times in the NT: seven times preceded by "from" (*ajpov*) and the other three times by "before" (*prov*).

In addition to Luke 11:50, the phrase "from the foundation of the world" (*ajpo; katabolh' n kovsmou*) also appears in Matt 13:35; 25:34; Heb 4:3; 9:26; Rev 13:8; 17:8. In Heb 4:3 the writer says God's creation "works were finished from the foundation of the world." Verse 4 says that "God rested on the seventh day from His works." The two statements are clearly synonymous: God finished and rested at the same time. This implies that the seventh day (when God finished creating, Gen 2:1-3) was the end of the foundation period. So the foundation does not refer simply to the first moment or first day of creation week, but to the whole week.<sup>23</sup> The

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<sup>21</sup>David E. Garland, *Mark: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1946); R. Alan Cole, *Mark*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); Ezra P. Gould, *Gospel According to St. Mark*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1896) (on 10:6 Gould says only that "Jesus goes back from the Mosaic Law to the original constitution of things," which would lend support to the YEC view); William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) (Lane does not comment on the phrase in 10:6, although he implies by the presence of the definite article in his phrase "the true nature of human existence as it was revealed from the beginning of the creation" [emphasis added] that he understands 10:6 as I am interpreting it; on 13:19 he says only that it "is virtually a citation of Dan. 12:1" [471], which is an exaggeration; though the verses are similar, the wording is notably different; Daniel speaks of a time of trouble such as never has been "since there was a nation," whereas Jesus says "since the beginning of creation"); Douglas R. A. Hare, *Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996); James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975); James A. Brooks, *Mark*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman, 1991); C. F. D. Moule, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1965).

<sup>22</sup>Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2d ed. (1979) 112, 456; 3d ed. (2000) 138, 573.

<sup>23</sup>Heb 1:10 confirms this when it says that "in the beginning" God "laid the foundation of the earth" (*th;n gh'n ejqemelivwsa*, literally "founded or established the earth") and "the heavens are the works of His hands," all of which occurred before Adam was made.

context, grammar, and lexical evidence in Matt 13:35; 25:34; Heb 9:26; Rev 13:8; 17:8 do not support any alternative sense of the phrase  $\alpha\pi\omicron\varsigma \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\eta' \omicron\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\mu\omicron\upsilon$ , particularly the restricted meaning “foundation (or beginning) of the human race.” The other uses of “foundation of the world” include the beginning of creation in Gen 1:1 and furnish grounds for concluding that the phrase in these verses also refers to the very beginning of creation.

In Luke 11:50-51, “the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world” ( $\alpha\pi\omicron\varsigma \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\eta' \omicron\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\mu\omicron\upsilon$ ) is juxtaposed with the statement “from the blood of Abel” ( $\alpha\pi\omicron\varsigma \alpha\iota\{\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\} \{\text{Abel}\}$ ). The parallelism is clear: “blood” in both verses, the two temporal phrases beginning with  $\alpha\pi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  (“from” or “since”), and repetition of “charged against this generation.” The parallelism strongly suggests that Jesus knew that Abel lived very near the foundation of the world.

The phrase, “before the foundation of the world” ( $\pi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\eta' \omicron\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\mu\omicron\upsilon$ ), appears in John 17:24; Eph 1:4; and 1 Pet 1:20. In John 17:24 the sense “before the beginning of all creation” (not merely before the creation of man<sup>24</sup>) best fits the context, for the Father loved the Son eternally before the creation of the heaven and the earth in Gen 1:1 (“before the world<sup>25</sup> was,” John 17:5).<sup>26</sup> Similarly, given the nature of the foreknowledge of God, one can be certain that in Eph 1:4 Paul meant that God chose believers in Christ before anything was created, not just before the first two humans were made.<sup>27</sup> Undoubtedly, in 1 Pet 1:20 Peter also meant that Christ was foreknown by the Father before the creation of the earth (and therefore before the creation of anything else, since the earth was created first). So, in these cases “foundation of the world” refers to the whole creation week (Genesis 1).

The majority of Lukan commentators do not comment on the phrases under

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<sup>24</sup>Those who think this phrase in John 17:5, 24 refers to the beginning of the whole creation include D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); John Gill, *An Exposition on the New Testament* (London: George Keith, 1774-1776); Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971); George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Dallas: Word, 1987); R. V. G. Tasker, *John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); and Roger L. Fredrikson, *John* (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1985).

<sup>25</sup>John 1:9-10 says that Jesus came into the world and was in the world that He made. Clearly, in John 1 Jesus is the maker of everything, not simply the human race, and He came into the physical world from His pre-incarnate spiritual life in heaven. In John 11:27 Martha says that she knew Jesus was the Son of God who comes into the world. It is doubtful that she was thinking and meaning anything different than Jesus did with this language. So “world” ( $\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\mu\omicron$ ) in these verses, as in 17:5, 24 and Acts 17:24, is clearly referring to the whole creation, not simply humanity or even the sinful worldly system.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Col 1:16-17 for similar teaching.

<sup>27</sup>See Paul’s similar teaching in 2 Tim 1:9 and Titus 1:2 (NIV and KJV are accurate translations of the time phrase, whereas the NASB is not).

consideration.<sup>28</sup>

Marshall's only relevant remark is that ἀπό; καταβολῆς ("from the foundation") is always used in the NT to refer to the beginning of the world.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Lenski comments that the phrase "implies that God laid that foundation when he called the world into being, and the phrase is used to denote the beginning of time."<sup>30</sup> Both comments support the young-earth interpretation.

Hendriksen says that "the reason why Jesus says 'from Abel to Zechariah' is that according to the arrangement of the books in the Hebrew Bible, Genesis (hence 'Abel') comes first; Chronicles (hence 'Zechariah') last."<sup>31</sup> However, the verses are not referring to the books of Scripture, but rather to people. Furthermore, scholars are not in agreement about which Zechariah this was in history or about when the present order of the OT books became canonical. A far more likely reason, given the contextual reference to the blood of these men (v. 51), is that Abel was the first prophet killed and Zechariah the last prophet killed.

Most of the commentators on Mark and Luke are silent on the phrases in these verses. Of those who do comment, many support the young-earth interpretation. The others merely make assertions (without offering support for their interpretations), or the argumentation given does not overturn the conclusions of the analysis above.

#### 4. "Preliminary conclusion about Jesus' view of the age of the earth."

From the study of these Jesus AGE verses, one sees that Jesus taught that man has existed essentially as long as the entire cosmos has. Given His evident belief in the literal historical truth of all of Genesis 1–11 and the historical reliability of the rest of the OT (including its chronological information such as in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11), we have strong grounds to conclude that He believed in a literal six-day creation week which occurred only a few thousand years ago. No other

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<sup>28</sup>Alfred Plummer, *Gospel According to S. Luke*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901); John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, vol. 35B of Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1993); Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) and Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996); Walter L. Liefeld, "Luke," vol. 8 of *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984); Leon Morris, *Luke*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); Henry Alford, *The New Testament for English Readers* (Chicago: Moody, ca. 1958); William H. Van Doren, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1981); Frederic L. Godet, *Commentary on Luke* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1981); Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951); G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to Luke* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1931); Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

<sup>29</sup>I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1995) 505. He does give one exception to this general statement, Heb 11:11. But this reference is wrong and probably should read Heb 11:10.

<sup>30</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1946).

<sup>31</sup>William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978).

understanding adequately accounts for the Jesus AGE verses and His approach to the historicity of Genesis.

But, as will be demonstrated below, the vast majority of Christian old-earth proponents have not taken into account the Jesus AGE verses and the arguments of the few who have commented on them lack cogency, are inherently self-contradictory, fail to deal with all the evidence, or are inconsistent with the evidence.

### Young-earth Creationist References to the Jesus AGE Verses

For decades, young-earth creationist writers have cited these verses in articles and books in defense of the earth being only thousands of years old, emphasizing that the statements of Jesus show that Adam could not have been created billions of years after the beginning, as all old-earth views maintain.<sup>32</sup> Most of those

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<sup>32</sup>See Henry Morris, "Christ and the Time of Creation" (*Back to Genesis*, No. 70), *Acts and Facts* (ICR, Oct. 1994) a-b (cites all three Jesus AGE verses); Henry Morris, "The Bible and Jesus Christ" (*Back to Genesis*, No. 125), *Acts and Facts* (ICR, May 1999) c (all three verses); Carl Wieland, "The earth: how old does it look?" *Creation Ex Nihilo* 23/1 (December 2000–February 2001):8-13 (cites Mark 10:6 and Luke 11:50-51, and has a time-line to illustrate the point made), online at <http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v23/i1/howold.asp>; Charles Taylor, "Jesus on creation," *Creation Ex Nihilo* 20/2 (March–May 1998):55 (cites Mark 10:6), online at [www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v20/i2/creation.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v20/i2/creation.asp), accessed 12/26/06; Henry Morris, *Scientific Creationism* (San Diego: Creation-Life Pub., 1974) 246 (cites Mark 13:19); Morris, *King of Creation* (San Diego: CLP Publishers, 1980) 54 (cites Mark 10:6); Morris, *The Biblical Basis of Modern Science* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) 113, 392 (cites Mark 10:6); Henry Morris, *Biblical Creationism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993) 148 (cites Mark 10:6; 13:19), 151 (cites Luke 11:50-51); Henry Morris & John Morris, *The Modern Creation Trilogy* (Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books, 1996) 1:79-80, 140, 151, 214 (cites all three verses); John Whitcomb, *The Early Earth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986) 36 (cites all three verses); Jobe Martin, *The Evolution of a Creationist* (Rockwall, Tex.: Biblical Discipleship Publishers, 2002) 28-29 (cites Mark 10:6); Douglas Kelly, *Creation and Change* (UK: Christian Focus, 1999) 129-34 (refers to or quotes all the Jesus AGE verses (along with all the other NT verses relevant to the interpretation of Genesis 1–11 and concludes that they indicate nothing "other than the literal, chronological understanding of the six days of creation and the succeeding patriarchal history"); Sid Dyer, "The New Testament Doctrine of Creation," in *Did God Create in Six Days?*, eds. Joseph Pipa and David Hall (Taylors, S. C.: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1999) 222-23 (cites all three verses); Bert Thompson, *Theistic Evolution* (Shreveport, La.: Lambert Book House, 1977) 227 (cites Mark 10:6); Travis Richard Freeman, "The Chronological Value of Genesis 5 and 11 in Light of Recent Biblical Investigation" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998) 159, 184 (cites Mark 10:6).

For an Eastern Orthodox perspective, see Fr. Seraphim Rose, *Genesis, Creation and Early Man* (Platina, Calif.: Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2000) 150 (cites Mark 10:6), 228 (cites Luke 11:50-51). In both cases in Rose's work the comments are in the editor's footnotes. This work documents through lengthy quotations that the young-earth view was the unanimous belief of Eastern Orthodox "Church Fathers" until the advent of old-earth evolutionary ideas in the nineteenth century. See my review of this important book: "Orthodoxy and Genesis: What the fathers really taught," *TJ* 16/3

creationist books are still in print.<sup>33</sup> It would appear that either old-earthers are not reading the young-earth literature, as they tell the church that young-earth creationists are wrong about the age of the earth and about the importance of the subject, or the old-earthers are simply overlooking the point being made by young-earthers from the teaching of Jesus on this matter.

Some of the early nineteenth-century defenders of young-earth creationism (called “Scriptural geologists”) also used these statements of Jesus as they resisted the idea of millions of years that was engulfing geology at that time.<sup>34</sup> In 1834 the Anglican minister, Henry Cole, argued this way from Mark 13:19:

Now, is there a geologizing mortal upon Earth who will assert, that the Redeemer is here speaking of ‘afflictions’ experienced by a world of creatures, who lived in a mighty space between ‘the beginning,’ and the present race of mankind? Will any geological sceptic, we repeat, dare aver, that our Lord is here referring to a race of beings of whom his disciples had never heard, and whose existence was never known to men or saints, till discovered by wondrous Geologists in the nineteenth century! Must not every scientific, unless he violate every remnant of natural understanding, honesty, and conscience, confess that the Saviour is here speaking to sons of men of the ‘afflictions’ of the same sons of men which have been from the beginning of the Creation of this world? Then, here is the creation of man immediately, manifestly, and undeniably, connected with ‘the beginning’!<sup>35</sup>

But the early nineteenth-century Christian old-earth proponents largely ignored the Genesis text and all of them overlooked the Jesus AGE verses, as they told the church to accept millions of years and to regard the age of the earth as unimportant. As will be seen, old-earth proponents continue to do this.

As part of a thorough survey of evangelical scholarly literature addressing the age of the earth, we consider first commentaries on Genesis, then systematic

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(2002):48-53, online at [www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/magazines/tj/docs/v16n3\\_mortenson.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/magazines/tj/docs/v16n3_mortenson.asp), accessed 12/26/06.

<sup>33</sup>Two of the most prominent young-earth creationists for many years have been Henry Morris and John Whitcomb.

<sup>34</sup>See Mortenson, *The Great Turning Point* (Master Books, 2004).

<sup>35</sup>Henry Cole, *Popular Geology Subversive of Divine Revelation* (London: J. Hatchard & Son, 1834) 46-47. See also George Bugg, *Scriptural Geology* (London: L. B. Seeley & Son, 1826-27) 1:108 (uses Mark 10:6). For historical background on the Scriptural geologists, see my published article, online at [www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/magazines/tj/docs/tjv11n2\\_scrip\\_geol.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/magazines/tj/docs/tjv11n2_scrip_geol.asp), accessed 12/26/06. For a summary of Cole’s and Bugg’s lives and objections to old-earth geology, see my published articles, which are online at [www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/magazines/tj/docs/tjv13n1\\_cole.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/magazines/tj/docs/tjv13n1_cole.asp), accessed 12/26/06, and [www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/magazines/tj/docs/tjv12n2\\_george\\_bugg.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/magazines/tj/docs/tjv12n2_george_bugg.asp), accessed 12/26/06, respectively.

theology texts, and finally a variety of other popular-level and scholarly books that discuss the issue.

### Commentaries on Genesis Regarding the Jesus AGE Verses

1. *Young-earth creationist commentaries on Genesis.* Morris, MacArthur, and Leupold refer to at least one of the Jesus AGE verses to argue for the historicity of Genesis 1–11.<sup>36</sup> This supports their young-earth conclusions about Genesis, although they do not explicitly make the point from the verses about Jesus believing in a young earth. However, Morris's study Bible, *The Defender's Bible* (Grand Rapids: World, 1995) is explicit on this point.<sup>37</sup> Rice says nothing about the Jesus AGE verses.<sup>38</sup>

2. *Old-earth creationist commentaries on Genesis.* Almost all Genesis commentaries by old-earth proponents that I examined apparently overlooked the Jesus AGE verses (most also show little, if any, acquaintance with young-earth literature). These include Kenneth Mathews, John Walton, Bruce Waltke, J. Vernon McGee, Warren Wiersbe, John Sailhamer, Allen Ross, Arthur Pink, Ronald Youngblood, Gordon Wenham, and W. H. Griffith-Thomas.<sup>39</sup> Space precludes detailed

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<sup>36</sup>Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) 103 (Mark 10:6). John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001) 24, who refers to Mark 13:19 in arguing that the NT speaks of creation as a past, completed event. H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1942), who cites Matt 19:4-6 (the shorter and less explicit parallel of Mark 10:5-9) in arguing that Genesis 1 is "pure history" (36). But Leupold does not discuss the Jesus AGE verses either in Genesis 1 or in his expositions on Genesis 5 and 11.

<sup>37</sup>He has notes on Matt 19:4 (explaining that Jesus took Genesis as literal history), Mark 10:6 (emphasizing that Jesus was a young-earth creationist), Mark 13:19 (mentioning young-earth implications and showing that "beginning of creation" is synonymous with "beginning of the world" in the parallel passage of Matt 24:21), and Luke 11:50 (pointing out that Abel was at the foundation of the world, not four billion years after the formation of the earth).

<sup>38</sup>John R. Rice, *In the Beginning* (Murfreesboro, Tenn.: Sword of the Lord, 1975). The book claims to give detailed studies on creation vs. evolution, the Flood, etc. It strongly recommends Whitcomb and Morris's *The Genesis Flood*. He argues extensively that the gap and day-age theories are unbiblical and believes that rocks and fossils are the evidence of the Flood, not millions of years. But he does not refer to the apostolic evidence for the historicity of Genesis 1–11 or to the Jesus AGE verses.

<sup>39</sup>Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, The New American Commentary (Broadman and Holman, 1996); John H. Walton, *Genesis*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001); Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 31; J. Vernon McGee, *Genesis* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991) 60-61, 133; Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Basic: An Old Testament Study—Genesis 1–11* (Colorado Springs: Victor, 1998), who is uncertain of the age of the creation, but clearly believes it is billions of years; John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990); Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998); Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis* (Chicago: Moody, 1922); Ronald Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991); Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (Milton Keynes, UK: Word, 1991); W. H. Griffith Thomas (1861-1924, principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford), *Genesis 1–25:10*

comment on them.

However, James Boice's commentary is worthy of brief discussion because (1) he does refer to some of the Jesus AGE verses and (2) his lack of careful reflection on the issue of the age of the earth is symptomatic of the above commentaries. In the chapter entitled "Fact or Fiction?" (a question about Genesis that Boice fails to answer clearly), he has a sub-section called "The Teaching of Jesus." Boice there says, "A special aspect of the attitude of Scripture to Genesis is the teaching of Jesus Christ. This obviously carries special weight.... [I]t is surely of interest to those who profess to follow Jesus as their Lord to know what He said. His teaching has special weight if only because we revere the Lord highly."<sup>40</sup> Yes, indeed! How sad then to see that Boice discusses Matt 19:3-6 but not the parallel passage in Mark 10:2-6, which shows Jesus to be a young-earth creationist. Boice quotes a small part of Mark 13:19 to say that God created. But he does not quote the rest of the verse, which is so relevant to the age of the earth, and he does not comment on Luke 11:50-51. Is this giving special weight to Jesus' teaching on this subject?

Boice rejects theistic evolution, but he also rejects the Flood as the cause of most of the fossil record. He has doubts about the gap theory, and sees problems with the day-age view and framework hypothesis. So he is not sure how to harmonize the Bible with millions of years. In chapter 8 on young-earth creationism's view of Genesis 1-2, Boice uses quotes from Whitcomb and Morris' *The Genesis Flood* to summarize the view. He then gives several points that should guide one's evaluation of young-earth creationism. He says, "First, there is the concern for biblical teaching. More than this, creationists want to make biblical teaching determinative."<sup>41</sup> Boice is correct, and such a hermeneutic is the necessary corollary of the doctrine of inspiration. Whatever God says is always determinative for the believer, regardless of the views of other supposed sources of authoritative truth that contradict God's Word. Boice quickly adds that "we have to admit here that the exegetical basis of the creationist is strong."<sup>42</sup> But as his discussion continues, he reveals that the only reason he rejects the young-earth creationists' sound exegesis is because so-called science confidently asserts that the creation is billions of years old.<sup>43</sup> What happened to the teaching of Jesus, which Boice says is so determinative?

### **Systematic Theology Texts Regarding the Jesus AGE Verses**

1. *Young-earth creationist systematic theology texts.* In his discussion on

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(London: Religious Tract Society, 5th ed., n.d.).

<sup>40</sup>James M. Boice, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982) 1:21.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 59-60.

creation, Berkhof argues for literal days and against the gap and day-age views.<sup>44</sup> He does not explicitly state his view on the age of the earth, but uses Exod 20:11 in defense of his view, rejects theistic evolution, rejects human evolution, and seems to reject old-earth geology.<sup>45</sup> However, he does not refer to the Jesus AGE verses, except to affirm (by reference to Mark 10:6) that the creation had a beginning.<sup>46</sup> Ryrie refers only to Luke 11:51, and then merely in relation to Jesus' view of the extent of the OT canon.<sup>47</sup> Reymond lists many OT and NT references (including Luke 11:51) to support his contention that Genesis 1–11 is reliable history and he refers to Mark 10:6 when he states that “to question the basic historical authenticity and integrity of Genesis 1–11 is to assault the integrity of Christ's own teaching.”<sup>48</sup>

2. *Old-earth systematic theology texts.* For the most part, systematic theology texts written by old-earth proponents also overlook the Jesus AGE verses, or if they refer to them, they do not comment on the implications for the age of the earth. I carefully examined the relevant discussions of Hodge, Feinberg, Thiessen, Erickson, Buswell, and Henry.<sup>49</sup> I will comment on two other texts as representative.

Lewis and Demarest discuss the origin of the world and humanity in their 1996 theology text. In numerous statements they badly misrepresent the young-earth view,<sup>50</sup> which is not surprising since they do not demonstrate familiarity with the

<sup>44</sup>Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 150-64.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 181-88.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>47</sup>Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago: Moody, 1999) 122.

<sup>48</sup>Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of The Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998) 118.

<sup>49</sup>Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (reprint of 1871-73 ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), who discusses Genesis and geology in 1:570-74 and the antiquity of man in 2:33-39; John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2001) 537-624; Henry Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949); Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985) 367-73; James Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962); Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. VI (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1983).

<sup>50</sup>Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, vol 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996). The discussion on the young-earth view has several misrepresentations (23). They equate “catastrophism” (which is still evolutionary and old-earth) with “flood geology” (which is young-earth in perspective). They falsely accuse young-earthers of believing that “all” the strata, fossils, volcanic activity, and mountain formation were caused by the Flood (informed young-earthers are always careful to say “most”). They say that young-earthers reject “the findings of astronomy and geology,” whereas the young-earthers reject only the *naturalistic interpretations* of the observational evidence. They also say that young-earthers regard “the absence of any developmental mechanisms as essential to theological orthodoxy” and refer the reader to an article by Pattle Pun in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (390), which further distorts the young-earth view by saying that young-earthers “ignore the vast amount of data supporting the observable micro-evolutionary processes in nature and the laboratory.” In fact, young-earthers have always believed in “micro-evolutionary” changes due to natural selection and mutations, but they have denied (with supporting arguments) that such changes have any value as

recent creationist literature (but refer to much recent old-earth literature). It would appear that they did not even read carefully the two older books by Henry Morris (published in 1974 and 1984), which they cite, both of which refer to the Jesus AGE verses.<sup>51</sup> They argue for the day-age view, concluding that “ultimately, responsible geology must determine the length of the Genesis days.”<sup>52</sup> What happened to the principle of Scripture interpreting Scripture? They do refer to Mark 10:6; 13:19; Luke 11:51, and affirm that “Jesus clearly endorsed the validity of the Old Testament creation doctrine”<sup>53</sup> and that “the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles who wrote the New Testament by the Spirit’s inspiration understood the early chapters of Genesis to be informative.”<sup>54</sup> However, it is not clear what “endorsed the validity” and “informative” in these statements are meant to convey regarding the truthfulness or proper interpretation of Genesis 1–11. In any case, Lewis and Demarest apparently have failed to grasp the implications of Jesus’ words for their view of the age of the earth.

In his *Systematic Theology* Grudem deals with Mark 10:6, but not Mark 13:19 or Luke 11:51. His refutation of the young-earth reasoning from Mark 10:6 is one sentence: “This argument also has some force, but old Earth advocates may respond that Jesus is just referring to the whole of Genesis 1–2 as the ‘beginning of creation,’ in contrast to the argument from the laws given by Moses that the Pharisees were depending on (v. 4).”<sup>55</sup> This objection makes little sense; it actually affirms that Adam and Eve were indeed at the beginning of creation, not billions of years after the beginning, just as young-earthers contend. In any case, whatever statements in Deuteronomy 24 the Pharisees were relying on is irrelevant to Jesus’ statement and belief about when Adam and Eve were created. Furthermore, Grudem apparently *imagines* how old-earth advocates *might* evade the force of this young-earth argument, but he does not cite and I do not know of any old-earth proponent who has *actually* reasoned this way. So, the young-earth argument from Mark 10:6 has more than just “some force.”

### Other Old-earth Writings Regarding the Jesus AGE Verses

The following authors either promote or at least accept belief in millions of

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evidence in favor of amoeba-to-man “macroevolution.” Similarly, Lewis and Demarest assert that young-earthers believe that the Flood “accounts for *all* the observable geological evidence by observable evidence from *all* areas *universally*” (47) [emphasis added at the points of misrepresentation].

<sup>51</sup>See notes 61 and 67 to chapter 1 of vol. 2 (499).

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>55</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 297.

years: Snoke, Arnold, Lucas, Forster and Marston, Ramm, Cabal, and Kaiser.<sup>56</sup> So do Newman and Eckelmann, E. J. Young, Harris, Mark Ross, Moreland, Scofield, Orr, Hague, Wright, and Mauro, Davis Young, Snow, and Stek.<sup>57</sup> So also do Bradley and Olsen, Blocher, Hugh Ross, Howard Vos, Free, Archer, Sailhamer, Warfield, and Kline.<sup>58</sup> But none of these scholars interacts with the Jesus AGE verses and most of

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<sup>56</sup>David Snoke, *A Biblical Case for an Old Earth* (Hatfield, Pa.: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1998), a day-age proponent, who is an elder in a Presbyterian church and a Ph.D. Asst. Prof. of Physics and Astronomy, Univ. of Penn (IBRI is an influential group among evangelical academics and has produced a number of books strongly opposed to the young-earth view), who also ignores the Jesus AGE verses in his recent book, *A Biblical Case for an Old Earth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006); Bill Arnold, *Encountering the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), who favors either day-age or framework view; Ernest Lucas, *Genesis Today* (London: Scripture Union, 1989), who is a professing evangelical and a theistic evolutionist, has a Ph.D. in chemistry, has been a pastor and is currently vice-principal and tutor in biblical studies at Bristol Baptist College in England; Roger Forster and Paul V. Marston, *Reason and Faith* (Eastbourne, UK: Monarch, 1989); (see also their revised second edition: *Reason, Science and Faith* [Crowborough, UK: Monarch Books, 1999]); Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955); Ted Cabal, "Evangelicalism and Young-Earth Creationism: Necessary Bedfellows?," a paper given at the annual meeting of ETS in Colorado Springs in 2001 which answers the title question in the negative; Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978); Kaiser, *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001); Kaiser, *et al.*, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1996), who favors the day-age view.

<sup>57</sup>Robert C. Newman and Herman J. Eckelmann, *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* (Hatfield, Pa.: IBRI, 1977), who advocate the day-gap-day view; E. J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 1964), who wonderfully defends the full historicity of Genesis 1 (and refutes the Framework Hypothesis) and contends that the days of creation were chronologically sequential (non-overlapping), but who states "The Bible does not state how old the earth is" and "the length of the days is not stated" (102 and 104); R. Laird Harris, "The Length of the Creative Days in Genesis 1," *Did God Create in Six Days?*, eds. Joseph Pipa and David Hall (Taylors, S.C.: Southern Presb. Press, 1999) 101-11; Mark Ross, "The Framework Hypothesis: An Interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:3" in *ibid.*, 113-30; J. P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) (for further critique of Moreland's uncharacteristically superficial comments about the age of the earth, see Ken Ham, Carl Wieland, and Terry Mortenson, "Are (Biblical) Creationists 'cornered'?—a response to Dr. J. P. Moreland," *TJ* 17/3 [2003]:43-50, online at [www.answersingenesis.org/docs2003/1001cornered.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2003/1001cornered.asp), accessed 12/27/06); C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Holy Bible* (reprint of 1917 2d ed., Lake Wylie, S.C.: Christian Heritage Publications, 1994); the writings of Orr, Hague, Wright, and Mauro are in R. A. Torrey, ed., *The Fundamentals* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990); Davis A. Young, *Christianity and the Age of the Earth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982); in Howard Van Til, *et al.*, eds., *Portraits of Creation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), Young says nothing about the Jesus AGE verses in his chapter on the perceived tensions between biblical and evolutionary cosmogonies, nor does Robert Snow in his chapter criticizing the creation science movement, nor does John Stek in his chapter on "What says the Scriptures?"

<sup>58</sup>Walter Bradley and Roger Olsen, "The Trustworthiness of Scripture in Areas Relating to Natural Science," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, eds. Earl Radmacher and Robert Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 285-317; Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1984), who advocates the Framework Hypothesis; Hugh Ross, *The Genesis Question* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998); *idem.*, *Creation and Time* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994) (for a brilliant and thorough critique of Ross' teachings on creation and the age of the earth see Jonathan Sarfati's *Refuting*

them do not consider at all the NT teaching relevant to the correct interpretation of Genesis 1–11. Other authors who do the same deserve some comment. Their handling of Scripture on this subject is illustrative of the works above.

In *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*, Nigel Cameron presents some strong arguments in favor of the young-earth view, although he does not explicitly endorse it. He considers Matt 19:4 to be a “strong testimony to an historical reading of Genesis by Jesus himself.”<sup>59</sup> After discussing other relevant NT verses he concludes,

The New Testament view of the early chapters of Genesis, both as to the essentials (that Adam was a real man and that he really fell) and also as to certain details (such as the order of creation and Fall—Adam created first, Eve first to fall), is that an historical reading of the narrative is the appropriate one.... Evangelical Christians who desire to interpret Scripture faithfully will follow the New Testament writers in treating Genesis 2 and 3 as history. If they reject this reading, they do so at their peril.<sup>60</sup>

Cameron gives no reason for limiting his conclusion about historicity to Genesis 2–3, instead of applying it to all of Genesis 1–11. Cameron seems to imply that the historicity and fall of Adam are the only essentials taught in the early chapters of Genesis and that only “certain details” (of the order of creation and fall of Adam and Eve) are important, straightforwardly clear and trustworthy, but that the details about creation in six days, the global Flood, and the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 are not. He fails to provide any rationale for such a selective reading of the details of the text. The NT writers clearly indicate that they treated all those chapters (and their details) as literal history. If one rejects or ignores the *details* of the Creation narrative or the Flood, he places himself in great peril. Should not Jesus’ view on these matters, as well as the views of the NT writers, be considered? Cameron has not heeded his own very appropriate warning.

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*Compromise* [Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books, 2004]); Howard Vos, *Genesis* (Chicago: Moody, 1982); Joseph P. Free and Howard F. Vos, *Archeology and The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982); Archer, “A Response to The Trustworthiness of Scripture in Areas Relating to Natural Science,” in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, eds. Earl Radmacher and Robert Preuss (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 321-34; Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1994) (see also all of Archer’s earlier editions back to the 1964 original); John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 1996); on Warfield, see *Evolution, Science, and Scripture: B. B. Warfield, Selected Writings*, eds. Mark Noll & David N. Livingstone (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), which contains all of Warfield’s writings on the subject, especially 211-29 and 269-87; Meredith G. Kline, “Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, 48/1 (March 1996):2-15.

<sup>59</sup>Nigel Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of Scripture* (Exeter, UK: Paternoster, 1983) 85.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 90-91.

Given Cameron's affirmation of the authority of Scripture, I wanted to find out more about his views after reading his 2001 email to a colleague of mine, in which Cameron said this about his above-mentioned book: "I have long taken the view that it is open to us to be agnostic on the 'alternative' we put in place of the standard evolution position. It's fair to say that when I wrote that book I was more sympathetic to the young-earth view than I am now, but I was not committed to it even then."<sup>61</sup> So in January 2004 I wrote Dr. Cameron to clarify his position on the age of the earth and whether he still held to the arguments presented in his book. He replied, "My position has all along been somewhat agnostic, and indeed I do not think we are obliged to come up with alternative scenarios. So I don't think my position has changed!"<sup>62</sup> This is doubly perplexing when noting two more things. First, Cameron explains that the rapid, nineteenth-century compromise of the church with millions of years was because "first in geology and then in biology ... nineteenth century, biblical commentators hastened to accommodate their interpretation of Scripture to the latest orthodoxy in science."<sup>63</sup> And, secondly, he gave a glowing endorsement (on the back cover) of Douglas Kelly's defense of young-earth creationism (which includes reference to the Jesus AGE verses and other NT references to Genesis 1–11), *Creation and Change* (1997), saying, "A highly intelligent engagement with these crucial verses with which God declares himself to be a speaking God who is our maker. The discussion is scholarly but accessible, a model of the kind of exegetical theology which the church of our day needs." Surely, such inconsistent reasoning creates problems for a commitment to the authority of the Bible and of Jesus as Lord, not to mention problems for articulating the gospel in an intellectually rigorous and coherent way to a skeptical world.

Francis Schaeffer says that the Bible "*is* a scientific textbook in the sense that where it touches the cosmos it is true, propositionally true" and "wherever it touches upon anything, it does so with true truth, but not with exhaustive truth. That is, where it speaks of the cosmos, science, what it says is true. Likewise, where it touches history, it speaks with that [sic] I call true truth, that is, propositional, objective truth."<sup>64</sup> He argues that Genesis 1–2 are united descriptions of one creation account and even refers to Mark 10:6-8 to support that view.<sup>65</sup> He argues for the historicity (even the "historicity of the details") of the account of Adam and Eve<sup>66</sup> and

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<sup>61</sup>Cameron's email to my friend, dated Sept. 4, 2001, copy on file.

<sup>62</sup>Cameron's email to me, dated Jan. 7, 2004, on file.

<sup>63</sup>Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of Scripture* 72.

<sup>64</sup>Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1972) 35, 76 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 39-40.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 41-43.

the historicity of the Flood and even (rather weakly) defends it as being global.<sup>67</sup> However, he devotes merely one paragraph to the question of the length of days in Genesis 1, and only asserts that יום (*yôm*, “day”) can mean a long period as well as a normal day and so “we must leave open the exact length of the time indicated by *day* in Genesis.”<sup>68</sup> He gives absolutely no exegesis to defend this view. Following William Henry Greene and B. B. Warfield, he briefly argues that the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 have gaps.<sup>69</sup> But nowhere does he discuss the verses showing Jesus to be a young-earth creationist.

In his *No Final Conflict* (1975), Schaeffer said this book should be studied with the above book as a unity.<sup>70</sup> But this book, he says,

deals with the *possibilities* open to us where the Bible touches science in the first chapters of Genesis—that is, the possibilities that exist if we hold to the historic Christian view that both the Old and New Testaments in their entirety are the written Word of God without error in all that they affirm about history and science as well as about religious matters.<sup>71</sup>

Schaeffer affirms the “space-time” historicity of Genesis 1–11 and unity of the whole book. In defending this, he cites the *toledoths* in Genesis and fourteen NT verses. He says that “absolutely every place where the New Testament refers to the first half of Genesis, the New Testament assumes (and many times affirms) that Genesis is history and that it is to be read in normal fashion, with the common use of words and syntax.”<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, although he rejects the gap theory, he does still allow it as a “theoretical possibility.”<sup>73</sup> He accepts the day-age view as possible, as well as the literal day view, and says that he is not sure about the matter. He appears to lean toward a global Flood, but is hesitant about how to relate it to geological ages. And he accepts that animals could have died peacefully before the Fall, but that there would not have been violence and agonizing, cruel death (as in one animal chasing

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 133-34. He shows no evidence of having read Whitcomb and Morris’ *The Genesis Flood*, even though it was a landmark book that spawned the modern creationist movement and was published 10 years earlier by Schaeffer’s fellow Calvinists at Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers. *The Genesis Flood* deals not only with the extent of the Flood but also the date of the Flood (based on population growth rates, by which Schaeffer also reasons, although he does not do the math and so only limits the Flood to less than 20,000 years ago).

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 122-24.

<sup>70</sup>Francis Schaeffer, *No Final Conflict* (1975), reprinted in volume 2 of *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1982) 120.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid. (emphasis in the original).

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 132.

down another) before Adam's sin. But he fails to mention and take the Jesus AGE verses into account. Failing to take account of them certainly makes it easier to accept Schaeffer's *possibilities* for harmonizing the Bible with millions of years. But that is a serious oversight.

Geisler's encyclopedia of apologetics has three articles relevant to this discussion. In "Genesis, days of" (where he argues against young-earth creationism) and "Genealogies, Open or Closed" (where he argues for gaps in the Genesis genealogies), he does not deal with the Jesus AGE verses.<sup>74</sup> In "Creation and Origins," he does refer to and even quote Mark 10:6 and 13:19, but he uses them only to state that creation was a past, singular event, rather than a continuing process.<sup>75</sup> However, this contradicts Geisler's endorsement of Hugh Ross and the idea of millions of years, because the evolutionary astronomers and geologists (on whom Ross relies) argue for millions of years on the basis of *presently* observed physical and chemical processes going back in an unbroken sequence to the beginning of time. In other words, the evolutionists deny that the creation activities are different from present-day processes, in contrast to what Geisler (rightly) believes.

In a basic apologetics book, Geisler and Bocchino say that the order of creation in Genesis "does offer an extremely accurate account of the order of creation as compared to the discoveries of modern science"<sup>76</sup> (i.e., of *evolutionary* cosmology and geology). However, their supposedly wonderful harmonization fails to mention the creation of the birds, sun, moon, or stars.<sup>77</sup> So, once again we see a lack of careful attention to the biblical text. They tell their readers that they will not deal with the technical Hebrew details to defend their old-earth view. But they do not say where such details are discussed and unfortunately they fail to reckon with the Jesus AGE verses and other NT teaching germane to the age of the creation. Nevertheless, they do urge their young-earth readers to "stop the infighting over the question of age" because "many sincerely honest and intellectually gifted scholars" argue for an old earth.<sup>78</sup> Unfortunately, neither sincerity, nor honesty, nor intellectual giftedness, separately or combined, ensures correct (biblical) thinking, and history affords many examples of times when many, or even the majority of, scholars were wrong.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999). Geisler does not indicate which old-earth interpretation of Genesis he favors.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 165-66.

<sup>76</sup>Norman Geisler and Peter Bocchino, *Unshakeable Foundations* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2001) 174-75.

<sup>77</sup>They continue to ignore the birds, sun, moon, and stars in their chart of progressive creationism (178).

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 175 n. 6.

<sup>79</sup>For example, Athanasius was exiled five times before he almost single-handedly convinced the majority that Arius' view of the nature of Christ was wrong. Most of the visible church was wrong about the doctrines of salvation and indulgences at the time of Martin Luther's conversion. Most contemporary

In his recent book on science and faith, Collins does address some of the Jesus AGE verses, saying that “if this [young-earth] argument is sound, I’m in trouble.”<sup>80</sup> That is because he rejects the literal, six-day creation view. After summarizing accurately the young-earth argument from the Jesus AGE verses, he says that it “finds its credibility from the way the English ‘from *the* beginning’ seems so definite; but the Greek is not so fixed.”<sup>81</sup> He then discusses several verses to argue that “from the beginning” in Matt 19:4, 8 is referring to the beginning of the human race. He says that the phrase found in 1 John 1:1; 2:13-14 relates to Christ and refers “to a ‘time’ before the world began.” The same phrase used in 1 John 3:8 and John 8:44 in relation to Satan refers, he contends, “to the beginning of the world or perhaps to the beginning of his own rebellion.”<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, he correctly observes that 1 John 2:7, 24; 3:11 refer to the time when John’s readers became Christians or to the beginning of the apostles’ ministry. Without further comment Collins then concludes, “If we apply this insight to the verses in Matthew 19, we find that they most naturally refer to ‘the beginning’ of the human race.”<sup>83</sup> Attempting to neutralize the young-earth argument from Mark 10:6, he refers to Matt 24:21 (“from the beginning of the world”) and its parallel passage in Mark 13:19 (“from the beginning of the creation”). He says that these phrases cover all of time or at least all of the time that humans have existed to experience tribulation. But he contends that the total time since the absolute beginning is irrelevant to Jesus’ point in Mark 10:6. So he concludes that such verses “have no bearing on the age of the earth.”<sup>84</sup>

Several responses are possible. First, one might ask how Collins knows that young-earthers build their argument only from the italicized word (“the”) in the English phrase “from *the* beginning.” None of the young-earthers cited above argues that way. But in any case, the English phrase is no more definite than the Greek phrase. Second, in 1 John 1:1; 2:13-14 John easily could have said “He who was *before* the beginning” (cf. John 17:24; 1 Pet 1:20). But he says rather, “He who was *from* the beginning.” In the opening of his Gospel, which refers to the creation of *all* things in the beginning, no reason exists to see the verses as lending support to the restricted meaning of “the beginning of the human race.” Third, neither Collins’ suggested meanings of the verses about Satan (1 John 3:8) nor the verses about Christians (1 John 2:7; 2:24; 3:11) support his restricted interpretation. Since no one knows precisely what “from the beginning” refers to with respect to Satan, those

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scholars in the world presently accept Darwinian evolution (though most OEC Christians do not). In the eighteenth century most physicians believed that bleeding was an almost universal cure for sickness.

<sup>80</sup>C. John Collins, *Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway: 2003) 106.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 107.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

verses cannot be used to support his interpretation of “from the beginning of the human race.” But also, though that verse and the ones related to Christians in 1 John may be construed to give “insight” into Collins’ interpretation of Matt 19:4, they do so only because he has ignored the additional words “of creation” in the parallel passage of Mark 10:6.

Lastly, Collins overlooks Luke 11:50-51, which is relevant to his argument about Mark 10:6. No young-earthier has argued that the age of the earth is “the point” of any of the Jesus AGE verses. Although the particular phrases are incidental to the main thrust of Jesus’ statements, they nevertheless reveal something of Jesus’ worldview, i.e., that He is a young-earth creationist. In Luke 11 Jesus could have said merely that “the blood of all the prophets will be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel ...” and left out the words “shed from the foundation of the world.” This latter phrase is unnecessary to warn people of judgment, but its presence reveals an aspect of Jesus’ worldview. The same applies to the additional but unnecessary (if Jesus is only referring to the beginning of the human race) words “of creation” in Mark 10:6 and 13:19. Furthermore, it is very doubtful that any Pharisees and any Christian readers of the Gospels prior to the nineteenth century would have thought that Jesus was referring to only the creation of man or the beginning of the human race, for there is no biblical evidence that long ages of time elapsed between the absolute beginning in Gen 1:1 and the creation of man in Gen 1:26. As noted above, Jesus always treated the OT narratives as straightforward history.

We therefore have good reasons to reject Collins’ attempts to avoid the clear implications of the Jesus AGE verses for an understanding of the age of the earth. Also, it is clear from his book that the driving force behind Collins’ old-earth interpretations of Scripture is his unquestioning trust in the claims of the evolutionary geologists about the age of the rocks. At the end of his four-page discussion of geology, he states, “I conclude, then that I have no reason to disbelieve the standard theories of the geologists, including their estimate for the age of the earth. They may be wrong, for all I know; but if they are wrong, it’s not because they have improperly smuggled philosophical assumptions into their work.”<sup>85</sup> But, as I argue elsewhere,<sup>86</sup> smuggling philosophical assumptions into their work is precisely what geologists have done (usually unknowingly because of the educational brainwashing they received). Without the uniformitarian assumptions of philosophical naturalism, which have controlled geology (and astronomy) for the past two centuries, no “evidence” for millions of years would exist.

Supported by Hugh Ross, Stoner promotes the day-age theory and attempts

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 250.

<sup>86</sup>See Terry Mortenson, “Philosophical Naturalism and the Age of the Earth: Are they related?,” *The Master's Seminary Journal* 15/1 (Spring 2004):72-91, online at [www.answersingenesis.org/docs2004/naturalismChurch.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2004/naturalismChurch.asp), accessed 1/12/07.

to refute the young-earth arguments from the Jesus AGE verses.<sup>87</sup> First of all, he says that “Adam was created on the sixth day of creation, not the first. This was not the beginning of creation no matter how long or short the creation days were.” But, as noted before, “the beginning of creation” refers to the whole first week, and when Jesus said these words 4,000 years after the beginning, the sixth day was truly at the beginning of creation, on the level of precision that He was speaking (everyday language to a non-scientific audience). Second, Stoner argues that *ktivsi* (“creation”) in Mark 10:6 should be translated as “institution” so that Jesus should be understood to be talking about the beginning of the institution of marriage, not the beginning of creation. He bases this interpretation on the fact that in 1 Pet 2:13 *ktivsi* is translated in the NIV as “authority instituted.” But Stoner is mistaken because he did not pay careful attention to his own English quote of Peter, where it says “to every authority instituted *among men*,” i.e., to every human authority or “to every human institution” (as in NASB). The Greek text is clear: in *pavsh/ ajnqrwpivnh/ ktivsei* the adjective *ajnqrwpivnh/* modifies *ktivsei*. An institutional authority (such as kings, governors, and slave masters, which Peter discusses in the context) is indeed a “human creation” (the literal translation of Peter’s Greek words). But this is a very different contextual use of *ktivsi* than in Mark 10:6. Furthermore, Jesus could have easily said “from the first marriage” or “from the beginning of marriage” or “since God created man,” if that is what He meant. Also, if *ktivsi* in Mark 10:6 has the meaning “authority” or “institution,” it makes no sense. What would “from the beginning of authority” or “beginning of institution” mean? To make it meaningful, Stoner would have to add a word to the text, which has no clear contextual justification. Finally, Stoner ignores Mark 13:19 and Luke 11:50-51, which in two of Henry Morris’ books cited by Stoner expose the error of Stoner’s interpretation of Mark. That neither the NASB nor the NIV (nor any other English translation) uses “authority” or “institution” as a translation for *ktivsi* in Mark 10:6 is worth noting. All of the above applies to the reasoning of Geisler and Ankerberg,<sup>88</sup> who in their opposition to the young-earth view, reason essentially the same as Stoner and Ross on Mark 10:6.<sup>89</sup>

In their 1991 booklet on evolution, Ankerberg and Weldon mention Matt 19:4-5 (parallel to Mark 10:6) as part of their defense of the young-earth view. They

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<sup>87</sup>Don Stoner, *A New Look at an Old Earth* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1997) 53-54.

<sup>88</sup>John Ankerberg and Norman Geisler, “Differing Views on the ‘Days’ of Genesis,” online at [www.johnankerberg.com/Articles/science/SC0704W1.htm](http://www.johnankerberg.com/Articles/science/SC0704W1.htm), accessed 28 July 2005. See also, John Ankerberg, online at [www.ankerberg.org/Articles/science/creation-questions/SC-creation-questions-when-created.htm#28.%20What%20arguments%20are%20offered%20for%20the%20twenty-four%20hour%20day%20view](http://www.ankerberg.org/Articles/science/creation-questions/SC-creation-questions-when-created.htm#28.%20What%20arguments%20are%20offered%20for%20the%20twenty-four%20hour%20day%20view), accessed 28 July 2005. Geisler and Ankerberg also ignore Luke 11:50-51 and Mark 13:19.

<sup>89</sup>See my response to the Geisler/Ankerberg article online at [www.answersingenesis.org/docs2004/1101ankerberg\\_response.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2004/1101ankerberg_response.asp), accessed 12/27/06.

even state that they have studied the various old-earth reinterpretations of Genesis “in detail and believe they all have fatal biblical flaws.”<sup>90</sup> Unfortunately, in an October 2000 TV debate between Ross and Kent Hovind, Ankerberg has since ignored Jesus’ teaching, and his own previous reasoning based on it, and has abandoned the young-earth view by sympathizing with Hugh Ross’s old-earth views.<sup>91</sup> He has continued to promote Ross’s teaching in a 2004 TV series and in another series with Kaiser and Ross in 2005<sup>92</sup> and by moderating (but not with impartiality) the 8-part “The Great Debate” between Ken Ham and Dr. Jason Lisle from Answers in Genesis and Drs. Kaiser and Ross, a debate televised starting in January 2006.<sup>93</sup>

Wenham contends correctly that Jesus “consistently treats the historical narratives as straightforward records of fact.”<sup>94</sup> In his discussion that follows this statement he cites more than 50 passages from the Gospels and refers once to Mark 10:6 and three times to Luke 11:50-51. After one mention of the latter passage, Wenham states, “This last passage brings out his [Jesus’] sense of the unity of history and his grasp of its wide sweep. His eye surveys the whole course of history from ‘the foundation of the world’ to ‘this generation’.”<sup>95</sup> Wenham notes that “curiously enough, the narratives that are least acceptable to the so-called ‘modern mind’ are the very ones that he seemed most fond of choosing for his illustrations.”<sup>96</sup>

But later he strangely reasons in reference to Mark 10:2 that “the references to the ordinance of monogamy ‘from the beginning of creation,’ for instance, do not seem to necessitate a literal interpretation of chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis for their validity.” However, in the process of justifying this view he overlooks Mark 10:6 and instead focuses on the laws of Moses referred in Mark 10:3-4 (cf. Deut 24:1, 3). He seems not to have applied his own true statement to his thinking on origins: “Thus to our Lord the Old Testament is true as to its history, it is of divine authority, and its

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<sup>90</sup>John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *The Facts on Creation vs. Evolution* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1991) 43.

<sup>91</sup>See an analysis of this Ross-Hovind debate by Jonathan Sarfati online at [www.answersingenesis.org/news/ross\\_hovind\\_analysis.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/news/ross_hovind_analysis.asp), accessed 12/27/06.

<sup>92</sup>His two TV series on science and the Bible (“Why is the Big Bang Evidence that God Created the Universe?” [5 programs in 2004] and “Can the Biblical Account of Creation be Reconciled with Scientific Evidence Today?” [4 programs in 2004]) promoted the old-earth day-age teachings of Hugh Ross. The 2005 series of 5 programs with Kaiser and Ross is “Are the Genesis Creation Days 24 Hours or Long Periods of Time?”

<sup>93</sup>See online at [www.ankerberg.com](http://www.ankerberg.com). The unedited debate with critical commentary by the author of this article (exposing many errors of fact and logic in the comments of Drs. Ross and Kaiser) is available online at [www.answersingenesis.org/p/90-7-300](http://www.answersingenesis.org/p/90-7-300), accessed 12/27/06.

<sup>94</sup>Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* 12.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, 13.

very writings are inspired by God Himself.”<sup>97</sup>

Wenham presents the same arguments in summary form in his contribution to the defense of inerrancy.<sup>98</sup> He gives good reasons for rejecting the notion that Jesus accommodated His teachings to the (supposed) erroneous beliefs of His contemporaries. He cites Luke 11:50-51 three times (quoting it in full once) to affirm that “Jesus consistently treats Old Testament historical narratives as straightforward records of fact.”<sup>99</sup> But in his listing of 27 Gospel passages, he starts with Abel (instead of Adam) and again overlooks Mark 10:6 and 13:19. When he later refers to Mark 10:2ff., he states,

The teaching of monogamy as being God’s plan from ‘the beginning of creation’ perhaps does not necessitate a literal interpretation of chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis for its validity; but subsequent reference to the changed situation under Moses seems to require it. Seldom can a non-literal meaning be applied without some loss of vividness and effectiveness.<sup>100</sup>

Sadly, Wenham’s scholarly understatement weakens the authority of the Lord’s straightforward records of fact. And nowhere in his discussion does Wenham explain on what grounds he does not accept the literal interpretation of Genesis 1–2.

In a 1989 article on the history and future of evangelicalism, Wenham begins with these words: “Many devout and thoughtful people are deeply worried as to where evangelicalism is going.”<sup>101</sup> He recounts with sadness the fact that many evangelicals have slid into liberalism or at least a denial of inerrancy. He laments that the Christian faith and morals lost much ground in the twentieth century. He admits that “Darwin raised problems for biblical Christianity which neither the Victorians nor ourselves have ever wholly solved,” but he strongly rejects young-earth creationism. He considers it to be “far saner and healthier” to reject Darwinism while still accepting the millions of years demanded by evolutionary geologists and cosmologists, though he does not endorse any particular old-earth reinterpretation of Genesis.<sup>102</sup> In his proposed plan of action to revive evangelicalism, he says that “we shall probably have to work again and again at Genesis 1–11,” but apparently that

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>98</sup>John Wenham, “Christ’s View of Scripture,” in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) 3-38.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>101</sup>John Wenham, “Fifty Years of Evangelical Biblical Research: Retrospect and Prospect,” *The Churchman* 103/3 (1989):209. This influential paper was read at the prestigious Tyndale House Open Day at Cambridge University, May 14, 1988.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 212.

means coming up with new alternative old-earth reinterpretations, rather than accepting the straightforward literal interpretation which Jesus and the apostles affirmed.<sup>103</sup> He concludes by saying, “[W]e want the Church united in utter loyalty to Christ and his revelation ... without compromising biblical principles.”<sup>104</sup> But is it loyalty to Christ for us to ignore or reject Jesus’ teaching regarding the literal truth of Genesis and the age of the earth?

**Conclusion**

The sayings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels demonstrate that Jesus was clearly a young-earth creationist. Nothing in His teachings supports an old-earth view (of man being created long ages after the beginning of creation).

Two figures illustrate the importance of Jesus’ statements on this subject.

Figure 1

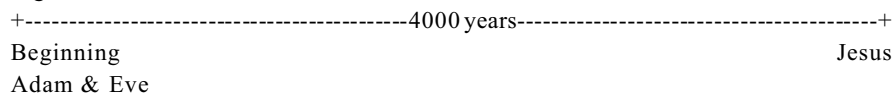
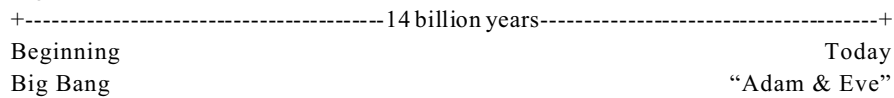


Figure 2



As figure 1 illustrates, the time from when Jesus spoke these words as recorded by Mark and Luke back to the first day of creation would be about 4,000 years, assuming no gaps in the Genesis genealogies.<sup>105</sup> Jesus taught that Adam was at the beginning of creation (the 6th day on a 4,000-year timescale would be the “beginning of creation” in the non-technical, everyday language that Jesus was using).

Contrast this to the evolutionary view, illustrated in figure 2, that all old-earth proponents embrace, namely that the big bang happened about 14 billion years ago, earth came into existence about 4.5 billion years ago and true *Homo sapiens* came into existence only a few hundred thousand years ago (or less). On a 14-billion-year timescale this would mean that man came into existence at the *very tail end* of creation up to the present.

So one cannot believe Jesus’ view and the evolutionary view on the age of

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 217.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 218.

<sup>105</sup>See the arguments in the sources cited in note 1.

the earth at the same time. They diametrically oppose each other.

Present-day young-earthers have been using the Jesus AGE verses in support of their view for decades. In contrast, of the sixty-one old-earth proponents examined (many of them among the top scholars in evangelicalism), only three (Grudem, Collins, and Stoner) deal with the Jesus AGE verses and attempt to rebut the young-earth creationist interpretation of them. Their old-earth arguments are very weak. Sadly, many of the old-earth proponents refer to each other's writings (therefore circulating their misguided arguments), and the vast majority of them do not attempt to refute the best young-earth arguments and, in fact, give little or no evidence of having read the most current, leading young-earth writings. The old-earth writers have influenced the church through seminaries and Bible colleges and through the endorsement of such prominent Christian leaders such as James Dobson, Bill Bright, Charles Colson, and R. C. Sproul.<sup>106</sup>

The above sixty-one old-earth authors hold on to the idea of millions of years for only one reason, and it is not because millions of years is taught in the Bible (for it is not).<sup>107</sup> It is, as many of these men plainly indicate, because they operate with the assumption that the evolutionary geologists and astronomers have proven scientifically that the creation is billions of years old.<sup>108</sup> Yet this is an uninformed and false assumption. Months or years of study are not necessary to see this. About 25 hours is sufficient. I plead with my old-earth Christian readers to learn recent data on the scientific arguments for a young earth.<sup>109</sup>

Mark Noll's scathing criticism of young-earth creationism is grossly in

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<sup>106</sup>Sproul has very recently changed to the young-earth position, but for most of his life he leaned toward acceptance of the millions of years. He had also endorsed one of Hugh Ross' books: *Creation and Time* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994) back cover.

<sup>107</sup>See Jonathan Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise* (Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books, 2004) 323-28, for a refutation of Hugh Ross' assertions that words like "ancient" or "long ago" or "of old" imply millions of years.

<sup>108</sup>In addition to C. John Collins, Meredith Kline is just one of *many* other examples. He states, "In this article I have advocated an interpretation of biblical cosmogony according to which Scripture is open to the current scientific view of a very old universe and, in that respect, does not discountenance the theory of the evolutionary origin of man." See Meredith Kline, "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 48 (1996):15 n. 47. Similar statements are in Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1985) 187; James M. Boice, *Genesis, An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1982) 1:57-62; J. P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) 219-20; Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000) 270-72; John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 1996) 15; Pattle P. T. Pun, "A Theory of Progressive Creationism," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 39 (March 1987):14. Many others could be listed.

<sup>109</sup>I would recommend John Morris, *The Young Earth* (Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books, 1994); Emil Silvestru's DVD "Rocks and Ages: Do they hide millions of years?"; ICR's DVD "Thousands, not Billions: Challenging an Icon of Evolution"; Terry Mortenson's DVD "Millions of Years: where did the idea come from?" All are available from [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org).

error. In his widely acclaimed book denouncing young-earthers for the (supposed) scandalous misuse of their minds, he states that they use

a fatally flawed interpretive scheme of the sort that no responsible Christian teacher in the history of the church ever endorsed before this century came to dominate the minds of American evangelicals on scientific questions.... [These young-earthers are] almost completely adrift in using the mind for careful thought about the world ... thinking they are honoring the Scriptures, yet who interpreting the Scriptures on questions of science and world affairs in ways that fundamentally contradict the deeper, broader, and historically well-established meanings of the Bible itself.<sup>110</sup>

Sadly, Noll bases his indictment of young-earth creationists largely on the historical interpretations of an openly agnostic (and former Seventh Day Adventist) historian of science, Ronald Numbers,<sup>111</sup> whom (amazingly) Noll describes as a “truly professional” historian who has “few bones to pick with basic Christian teachings.”<sup>112</sup> Numbers is certainly a justifiably respected historian of science. But being a self-proclaimed agnostic, he is far from being unbiased or neutral on basic Christian doctrines—he rejects most, if not all, of them! Furthermore, Noll also accepts the condescending evaluation of young-earthers by James Moore (a former evangelical, turned skeptic), and many other non-Christian historians. He offers no substantive exegesis of Scripture to defend his old-earth views and completely overlooks the Jesus AGE verses as he harangues young-earthers for shallow thinking and lack of scholarship. Judging from his text and footnotes, we might justifiably conclude that the only young-earth literature he has read is the introduction to Whitcomb and Morris’ *The Genesis Flood* (published 46 years ago!), although he seems to have read a considerable amount of literature from theistic evolutionists and progressive creationists. So where does the scandalous use of the evangelical mind really lie? And just who is using a fatally flawed hermeneutic to interpret Genesis? It is truly sad to see such a justly respected Christian historian ignore the overwhelming witness to young-earth creationism in the first eighteen centuries of church history.

We need to heed the words spoken by God to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. Though the Gospel writers record different aspects of God’s

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<sup>110</sup>Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 13-14. He said essentially the same thing in his much-read article, “The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind,” *Christianity Today* (25 Oct. 1994):29-32.

<sup>111</sup>Numbers does not discuss history before the 1850s to draw the erroneous conclusion that the young-earth view is a modern invention. Perhaps at the time he wrote this book he knew nothing at the time about the young-earth “Scriptural geologists” of the early nineteenth century. As my book *The Great Turning Point* shows, it is the old-earth view that is novel in the church. Shortly after publication, I sent Numbers a copy, so he knows now.

<sup>112</sup>Noll, *Scandal* 14.

declaration about the nature of Jesus' Sonship (Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35), they precisely agree in their quotation of God's command: "Listen to Him!" Evangelicals, and especially evangelical scholars, need to listen to what Jesus says about Genesis 1–11 and the age of the earth. Anyone who calls Him "Lord" cannot possibly have a different view than He has and say that the age of the earth does not matter?