

Science, The Bible, And The Age Of The Universe

(appropriate for Mid Schoolers and older)

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Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

Note: For this study you will need a picture of an unusually shaped bathroom sink. An example can be found at this link: <http://3.lushome.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/modern-kitchen-sinks-design-ideas-1.jpg>

How old is the universe, according to Science? About 15 billion years old (15×10^9 or 15,000,000,000 years). How old is the universe according to the Bible? Its much younger. We know this because the genealogies from Adam to Abraham are extremely precise and result in Abraham living about 2,000 years after Adam was created (**Genesis chapters 1, 5, and 11**). After Abraham, the timeline becomes more fuzzy in the Bible but by then we have secular history to help us and secular history universally agrees that Abraham lived at about 2,000 BC. So, the date of creation based on a combination of secular history and Bible genealogies was around 4,000 BC plus or minus 100 years. This is a huge difference from what science says – six orders of magnitude difference (one order of magnitude = multiply by 10)! How are you going to explain this?

It is important that you understand a few things about science. When we say, “science says the universe is 15 billion years old, science says man evolved in the following way”, what does that mean, “science”?

Science is really made up of two things:

- 1) **Observational Science** – observations, experimental data, repeatable experiments. We Christians love this stuff and we have no problem with it – we like it. But there is another part of science.
- 2) **Philosophical Science** – This includes dogma or ideology (strongly held beliefs) and in science it usually is presented in the form of assertions. The word “assertion” means “to strongly insist” that something is true. When a scientist makes an assertion he is saying, “I have no data, I have no observational evidence, there are no experimental results that support what I am about to say, nevertheless I strongly insist that the following statement must be true”. This is philosophy. We Christians reject philosophy in all its forms (**Colossians 2:8-9**). We accept the observational science but reject philosophical science in all its forms.

Colossians 2:8-9

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.⁹ For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

The problem is that most of the time observational science and philosophical science are mixed together and all of it is then presented as being “real science”. So, we have to develop the skill of identifying the pieces that are observational science, which we accept, and rejecting all of the pieces that are philosophical science.

Current scientific philosophy is based on two fundamental assertions (for which there is no evidence):

- 1) Everything that exists came into being by “random chance” and changes over time based on “random processes”. These are scientific terms for “dumb luck”. Molecules randomly collided with each other over and over and somehow caused things to happen. The scientific community believes in this idea based on faith. Like most people in the general population, they don’t want to have to believe in a God that will hold them accountable for their actions, so they assert that everything in existence must be here by dumb luck.
- 2) The rate at which we see things changing in today’s world must be the rate at which things have always changed from the beginning until now.

II Peter 3:3-6

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts,⁴ and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”⁵ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water,⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

What God is saying in this passage is that in the future (which is now) people are going to say that everything continues at the same rate from the beginning until now. God then points out two counter examples where things changed drastically and very fast – Noah’s Flood and the Creation of the Universe.

But once you accept the two atheistic, philosophical assertions you have no choice but to believe in an extremely old Earth and Universe. Why? Because if everything that exists today came about by random processes and somehow achieved the extreme level of complexity we see today in the human body, animals, ecosystems, etc. then it must have taken an extremely long time. Notice that nothing we have said so far is based on any observational evidence – just assertions. Once people have committed themselves to these beliefs, it drives their interpretation of the evidence we do have, to match these beliefs.

“Age of the Filled Sink”

Let me use an analogy. Let’s say you walk into the bathroom at 8:00am in the morning and look at the sink. Your sink has an unusual, irregular shape (hold up your picture of the unusually shaped sink). It is filled with water but you don’t know how it happened since you were not there to observe it being filled with water. You also notice that the spigot has a very slow drip to it – about one drop per minute.

You decide that it is important for you to figure out when the sink started to fill with water. Based on your belief that the sink must have filled itself (there was no person involved) and that the rate of filling has been the same in the past as it is today (one drop per minute) you set about to determine the “age of the filled sink”.

If you divide the volume of water in the sink by the volume of water in a single drop that should tell you the number of minutes since the first drop fell into the sink, thus providing an estimate of the “age of the filled sink”.

For some reason the government decides to pour hundreds of millions of dollars into research for determining the age of the filled sink. Scientists from universities and national laboratories around the world are involved.

Using their most sophisticated technologies, the scientists attempt to determine the volume of water in the sink. They use specialized laser and radar technologies to measure the exact contours of the shape of the sink and the levels of the water.

High powered, 3-D supercomputer models are created showing the shape of the filled sink in pseudo color, rotated in 3-space (that’s so cool looking! These people must be really smart).

Scientific conferences are held where hundreds of scientists debate the goodness of the measurement methods and try to show that their methods more accurately measure the tiny crevices and corners of the sink’s bottom. In other words, their method is better - which means they are the better scientist and should win the Best Paper award!

Graduate students earn their PhDs by characterizing the statistical variations of water volume in the drops still coming out of the spigot.

Other scientists argue about how much evaporation has been occurring from the water and how that would affect the “age” model.

As the research and arguments continue, new scientific words are created by the scientists to describe the complex technologies, theories, and arguments they are devising to solve this “age of the filled sink” problem.

Videos are made for children’s science classes about the Bathyseep Epoch, “when the first primordial drop of water fell from the ancient spigot, falling in slow motion, striking the bottom of the antediluvian sink, thus initiating the Age of the Filled Sink!”

Even though there is much disagreement and discussion, all the scientists agree that even a crude calculation shows that the “age of the filled sink” is somewhere between 3 to 12 months old.

Now let's change the story a little bit. You walk into the bathroom at 8:00am in the morning and look at the sink. Your sink has an unusual, irregular shape. It's filled with water but you don't know how it happened since you were not there to observe it being filled with water. You also notice that the spigot has a slow drip to it – about one drop per minute. You decide that it is important for you to figure out when the sink started to fill with water.

Just then, you notice a piece of paper (i.e post-it note) stuck to the mirror above the sink. The paper has writing on it and it says, "Hi there! Just wanted you to know that this morning at 5:00am I turned the water faucet full open for a minute and filled the sink up and then turned it off. Then I realized the drain wouldn't open. Had to leave for the airport. See you next year, Love Grandpa". Based on this additional evidence, how would your estimate of the "age of the filled sink" change? Now you would say that the age of the filled sink is only 3 hours old, not 3 to 12 months old!

Which approach is compatible with the observational evidence? They both are. Which model seems to explain the data? They both do. Which of these approaches is scientific? They both are equally scientific. So, what is the issue? The issue is the foundational assumptions used to interpret the observational data. In both cases faith had to be exercised. In the first story, they put their faith in a belief that there was no person who filled the sink and that the rate of dripping has always been the same as it is today. In the second story, they put their faith in the existence of Grandpa and believed that the note he wrote was true and accurate.

Conclusion

Since no one was there to observe the filling of the sink, the question of the "age of the filled sink" is outside the capabilities of observational science to answer. Likewise, the question of the age of the universe is also outside the capabilities of observational science to answer.

Other Verses Related to the Age of the Universe

Romans 1:18-22

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Psalms 104:5-8

He established the earth upon its foundations, So that it will not totter forever and ever.⁶ You covered it with the deep as with a garment; The waters were standing above the mountains.⁷ At Your rebuke they fled, At the sound of Your thunder they hurried away.⁸ The mountains rose; the valleys sank down To the place which You established for them.

Psalms 148:1-6

Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights!² Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!³ Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light!⁴ Praise Him, highest heavens, And the waters that are above the heavens!⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created.⁶ He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away.

Psalms 33:4-9

For the word of the LORD is upright, And all His work is *done* in faithfulness.⁵ He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD.⁶ By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses.⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.⁹ For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Science, The Bible, And The Age Of The Universe*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Genesis Chapter 1*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Genesis Chapter 5*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Genesis Chapter 11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 1:18-22*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalm 148:1-6*

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