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## Old-earth or young-earth belief

Which belief is the recent aberration?

by [Don Batten](#)

CMI takes the stand that the creation is thousands of years old, based on straightforward acceptance of the chronology in Genesis.

Churchian critics accept the billions of years touted today and claim that the 'young-earth' view is a recent invention of Protestant 'fundamentalist' churches. They claim that various Church Fathers or other ancient authorities wrote things that suggested they did not hold a 'young-earth' view.

However, such claims about the Church Fathers and Reformers have been shown to be wrong; for instance, in the rebuttal to the long-ager [Hugh Ross](#), by Mark Van Bebber and Paul Taylor.<sup>1</sup> It's vital to analyse what the scholars of the past *actually* said, instead of what people *claim* they said<sup>2</sup>—see [Did early Church leaders and reformers believe the literal creation account given in Genesis?](#) Sometimes a non-specific statement from them about Creation is misinterpreted as claiming that they didn't have a position on the days and timeframe. This is obviously the fallacy of arguing from silence.

It's worse when clear statements about the [Creation days](#) and timeframe are ignored in favor of non-specific ones. The correct practice is to interpret the non-specific passages by the specific ones. Note that, by the same methodology, hundreds of years in the future, someone could find articles by every CMI writer that are not specific on days or the timeframe and, by ignoring their clear statements elsewhere, claim that we don't have any position on these issues!

Even Augustine cannot remotely be used in support of old-earth beliefs. Even though he allegorized the Days of Creation (and lots of other passages—he was no Hebrew scholar), he tried to compress the days into an *instant*, which is *diametrically opposite* to what long-agers claim!

Furthermore, when ancient chronologies are researched, we find that many cultures, not just those based directly on the Bible, attest to an age for the creation of thousands of years. It seems that no serious scholar believed in the old-earth fashion of today. It is very much a modernist invention.

The following comes from Young's *Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible*, first published in 1879. Under 'Creation', Young listed dates of Creation compiled by a Dr William Hales,<sup>3</sup> who was an expert in chronology. None of them give a date for Creation of more than 9,000 years ago. Note that dates of Creation dates from various non-Christian/non-Jewish sources (India, Egypt, China, pre-Christian Greece, Babylonia, etc.) all testify to an age of thousands of years.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, both Catholic and Protestant scholars agreed on this issue. It seems that no serious chronologist believed in an old earth.

Many of the scholars listed in our table (below) made the chronology of the world a life-long study, involving meticulous cross-matching of ancient records (many of which are not available to us today). These scholars did not obtain these dates by throwing dice! It is only the arrogance of modern man that dismisses this tradition of careful scholarship.

We must underline again the importance of this issue. The old-earth advocates accept the recently fashionable claim that the earth is billions of years old. This 'age' is based on [radioactive dating](#). The same 'dating' puts the age of fossilized dead animals at up to hundreds of millions of years before people appeared on the scene. These fossils show evidence of violence and suffering—cancer and arthritis can be seen in the fossils, for example (see [Genesis: the Curse](#)). So in the old-earth schemes, this death and suffering was going on when God created Adam and Eve, and pronounced everything as 'very good' ([Genesis 1:31](#)). Hardly!

The Bible clearly teaches that the bad things came into being when Adam and Eve rejected the rule of the Creator over them, and the Curse of death came into effect ([Genesis 3:17–19](#), [Romans 8:20–22](#), etc.). And because of this true history of the world, Jesus, the 'last Adam', came into the world to die for the sinful descendants of Adam

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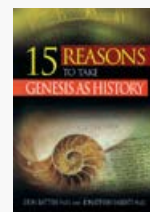


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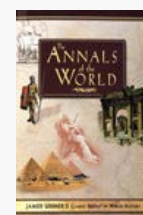
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(Romans 5:12 ff., 1 Cor. 15:21–22, 45).

In short, all attempts to marry the Bible with the old-earth view actually undermine the Gospel.

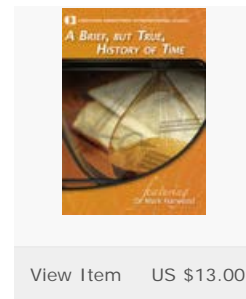
## Date of Creation

(from Young's Analytical Concordance of the Holy Bible, 1879 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1939—entry under 'Creation')

'Dr Hales, in his work entitled, "A New Analysis of Chronology and Geography, History and Prophecy,"? (vol. 1, p. 210 [published in 1830]), remarks: "In every system of chronology, sacred and profane, the two grand eras—of the *Creation of the World*, and of the *Nativity of Christ*—have been usually adopted as standards, by reference to which all subordinate epochs, eras and periods have been adjusted."? He gives a list of 120 dates, commencing B.C. 6984, and terminating BC 3616, to which this event has been assigned by different authorities, and he admits that it might be swelled to 300. He places it at BC 5411. The date commonly adopted is BC 4004; being that of Ussher, Spanheim, Calmet, Blair, etc., and the one used in the English Bible [KJV].'

'The following are some of the principal variations:.' (notations regarding dates of compilation or publication, extra information on sources, etc., have been added by *CMJ*).

Source of Creation Date	Authority	Date BC
Alfonso X (Spain, 1200s)	Muller	6984
Alfonso X (Spain, 1200s)	Strauchius, Gyles (1632–1682) <sup>5</sup>	6484
India	Gentil, French astronomer c.1760	6204
India	Arab records	6174
Babylonia	Bailly <sup>6</sup> (French astronomer, 1736–1793)	6158
China	Bailly	6157
Diogenes Laertius (Greece 3 <sup>rd</sup> Cent.)	Playfair	6138
Egypt	Bailly	6081
Septuagint (LXX) <sup>7</sup>	Albufaragi	5586
Josephus (1 <sup>st</sup> Century Jew)	Playfair	5555
Septuagint, Alexandrine	Scaliger, Joseph (1540–1609) <sup>8</sup>	5508
Persia	Bailly	5507
Chronicle of Axum, Abyssinian	Bruce (1700s)	5500
Josephus	Jackson	5481
Jackson		5426
Hales		5411
Josephus (1 <sup>st</sup> Century Jew)	Hales	5402
India	Megasthenes, <sup>9</sup> Greek historian (c. 340–282 bc)	5369
Talmudists	Petrus Alliacens	5344
Septuagint, Vatican		5270



Bede (673–735)	Strauchius	5199
Josephus (1 <sup>st</sup> Century Jew)	Univ. Hist.	4698
Samaritan computation	Scaliger	4427
Samaritan text	Univ. Hist.	4305
Hebrew (Masoretic) text		4161
Playfair and Walker		4008
Ussher, Spanheim, Calmet, Blair, etc.		4004
Kepler <sup>10</sup> (1571–1630)	Playfair	3993
Petavius (France, 1583–1652)		3984
Melanchthon (1500s)	Playfair	3964
Luther (1500s)		3961
Lightfoot		3960
Cornelius a Lapide	Univ. Hist.	3951
Scaliger, Isaacson		3950
Strauchius		3949
Vulgar Jewish computation	Strauchius	3760
Rabbi Lipman (1579–1654)	Univ. Hist.	3616

## 'Basil the Great' on Genesis

Basil was Bishop of Caesarea Mazaca, Cappadocia, from AD 370–379. He argued strongly against various heresies of the church of that day and was one of the great defenders of the doctrine of the Trinity. He also established charitable institutions, hospitals and schools, and organized famine relief. Basil was greatly admired and respected, and was called 'Basil the Great'.

Basil is one of the 'Church Fathers' that some have claimed did *not* believe in a historical Genesis. However, in a series of sermons on the Days of Creation, the *Hexaëmeron* ('Six Days'), Basil showed that he believed:

► In an instantaneous and recent Creation:

'In order that we might learn that the world came into existence at the timeless moment when God willed it, it was said: In the beginning God created ... which other interpreters express more clearly by these words: God made everything together, that is to say, at one time, and in a short time.

"So there was evening and there was morning." This is to be understood as the duration of one day and one night.'

► That the days of Genesis were 24-hour days:

"And there was evening and there was morning: one day." Why did the author not say "the first day", but "one day"? He wished to determine the measure of a day and night, fitting together the Night/Day time-scale (in fact 24 hours are the duration of a day—obviously comprising the night as well)—so that even if the day or night is longer/shorter at different seasons of the year, yet the total time-spell is always the same—one day. It is as if Moses had said, "24 hours is the measure of a day".'

► That the order of events in Genesis 1, days one to six, are as it happened.

For example, he indicated that plants were created before the sun; evolutionary ideas are contrary to Scripture; the Creation was originally 'very good' and completely lacking in evil; the words are to be understood by their plain meaning, not allegorized, and

to interpret Scripture otherwise is to put ourselves above God, the Holy Spirit, who inspired its writing.

In his writings, Basil countered various heresies, and it is clear that in his day, just as today, there was a strong link between allegorizing Genesis and all manner of strange interpretations of the rest of Scripture.

## Note

Adapted from David Watson, An early View of Genesis One, *Creation Research Society Quarterly* **27**(4):138–139, 1991. Based on: Stanislaus Giet (translator), *Homelies sur L'Hexaëmeron* by St. Basil, originally written in AD 370. In the series *Sources Chrétiennes*, Les Editions du Gerf, Paris, 1949. [See ref. 2 for more a literal translation of what St. Basil said.]

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## References and Notes

1. *Creation and Time—a Report on the Progressive Creationist Book by Hugh Ross*, Eden Productions, Mesa, Arizona, USA, 1994. [Return to text.](#)
2. See Anon., *Genesis means what it says—Basil (AD 329–379)*, *Creation* **16**(4):23, 1994. [Did early church leaders and Reformers believe the literal Creation account given in Genesis?](#), 9 July 2001. [Return to text.](#)
3. published in 1830. [Return to text.](#)
4. That is not to say that there were not beliefs in long ages, for example, with Greek and Indian mythological religions, as distinct from properly studied chronologies. [Return to text.](#)
5. *Brevarium Chronologicum* Book IV, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1699 in English. [Return to text.](#)
6. Bailly, Jean Sylvain. [Return to text.](#)
7. Based on the Greek translation of the Old Testament originally published in Egypt c. 250 BC. [Return to text.](#)
8. French classical scholar. [Return to text.](#)
9. A Greek historian from Iona, Megasthenes was Ambassador to India for King Seleucus I. He published *Indika* in four books. [Return to text.](#)
10. Kepler was a Lutheran and a great scientist who discovered the laws of planetary motion. [Return to text.](#)

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The Bible declares: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

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