

# Q&A: What do you think about this article on the age of the earth?

Anonymous asks:



*What do you think about this article on the age of the earth?  
<http://creation.com/how-old-is-the-earth>*

*The material is from a creationist book that has sold 350,000 copies. I believe he did a good job of arguing his case. The videos are good as well.*

Hi Anonymous, Thanks for the question. For my broader thoughts on evolution/creation I have an earlier post: here

You ask specifically about a particular article (linked above). I don't have time to do an in-depth consideration, or check out the videos, but an overview reading shows nothing surprising.

The age of the earth is a bone of contention in this debate. Evolutionary theories require an old age for the earth (read millions of years), and some (not all) creationist theories require a young age for the earth (read 6,000 years). The 6000 years figure derives from genealogies and other data from the biblical text and equates broadly (and understandably) to the broadest scope of recorded history.

The issues is therefore a question of "prehistory" – evolutionary theories posit an extensive prehistory. Certain creationist theories posit that there is no prehistory, unless

you count the five days that preceded the creation of Adam. There's a big difference.

The referenced article rehearses the typical attempt at rebutting evolutionary claims about the age of the earth. These are:

- Sedimentation and other geological metamorphoses do not require millions of years to occur. In particular, they can occur very quickly if you allow for a global cataclysmic event such as a global flood.
- Radiometric dating makes assumptions about the initial level of isotopic ratios and their net rate of decay in the presence of environmental factors. Anomalous results for known geological events are cited.

And there is a similar rehearsal of apparent evidence for a young earth, namely:

- The seas are not salty enough. (Ironically, this is a macro-level equivalent of the radiometric dating technique, and makes the same assumptions – initial state, environmental impact on a non-closed system.)
- Similarly, the moon is too close, there isn't enough helium in the atmosphere, and there aren't enough supernovae.

To which my response is a deliberate "meh." I'm tired of these debates, not because I'm overwhelmed by totalising scientists and have decided to throw in the towel, but because the important stuff is not in this debate.

The bit of history that I'm most interested in is the last 6000 years, which everybody agrees has existed. I'm interested in this bit of history because it's the bit that has people in it, and I'm interested in people. As far as prehistorical facts go, the Bible tells me little if anything, apart from the fact that God did it, and it was good, and we made it bad.

The age question is not even relevant to some of the bastions of creation science. You don't need a young earth to have a biblical global flood. You don't need a young earth if you posit cosmological timeframes between Gen 1:1 and Gen 1:2 and attribute the six (literal) days to God's creative intervention, preparing a home for his people, on an all-ready created (as part of the "heavens and the earth") that was as yet unshaped/unmade/unformed.

So, in my mind, the age of the earth is a non-essential point, in a non-essential debate, and has little bearing on the truthiness of Scripture.

*Photo credit: <http://www.sxc.hu/photo/1005409>*