

# Examining the Cosmos

Session 14

## *Dual Revelation* *The Harmony Between Nature & Scripture*

### Reference Document 21

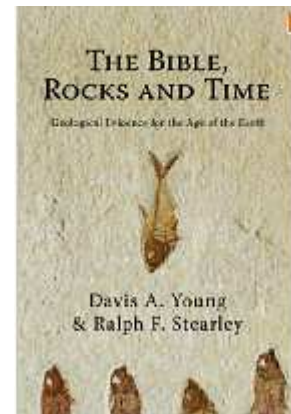
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The following excerpt is taken from the book “THE BIBLE, ROCKS AND TIME”, written by Davis A. Young & Ralph F. Stearley (InterVarsity Press, 2008 pages 494 – 495.) Young and Stearley are both renowned geologists and evangelical Christians. Their perspective provides an alternative view to Young Earth theology from men who are highly respected geologists and committed men of faith in Christ.

#### Affirming the Harmony Between Nature and Scripture

Sadly, too many Christians have distorted the content of the natural sciences in order to gain an accommodation with what they perceive to be the natural interpretation of Scripture. This is, in fact, what has happened with the modern young-Earth creationist movement. Having locked themselves into fixed interpretations of the creation and flood accounts, they find themselves in profound and widening disagreement with the results of modern geology and other sciences. Unwilling to allow conflict to exist, they have sought harmonization with science, not by reevaluating their biblical exegesis but by wholesale distortion of science and the data of nature. They have tried to force nature to say things it does not say.

During the study in this book, in order to hold a Young-Earth position, we would have had to ignore data, disagree with mainstream science and would have typically failed to agree with the larger geological contexts in focus. We would have had to find isolated details that seem to support their theories. Young-Earth creationists have attempted to develop an alternative science that lacks a solid empirical foundation and that cannot duplicate the successes of mainstream science. They have all too often supported their alternative science with quotations from mainstream geologic and scientific literature taken out of context. Their alternative science does agree with their biblical interpretations, but their approach provides no legitimate solutions for biblical studies, theology or science, because it leads to an illusory harmony between theology and science.



Their wholly new science has nothing to do with the real world in which God has placed us, the real world that God Himself made, shapes, sustains and controls and whose factuality has been determined and given by the sovereign God of the universe. Young-Earth creationism and Flood geology have almost nothing to do with the totality of evidence from Earth, whether chemical element distribution, sedimentary strata, fossils, magmatic activity, glaciation or metamorphism, except in the most superficial way

We do applaud young-Earth creationists for their desire to provide an alternative to the thoroughgoing materialistic worldview that pervades the popular writings of several world-class scientists whose names are well known to the public. We wholeheartedly concur with them in that effort. Young-Earth creationism, however, fails to provide and appropriated antidote to such materialism. Rather than combat materialism with pseudo-science, let's challenge that false philosophy with a robust biblical theism that lays bare the inadequacy of materialism to account for the origin and ongoing existence of anything-whether it is matter, order, coherence, law, consciousness, good and evil, or purpose and meaning. .

The Bible is indeed the infallible Word of God. But the created order is also from God, and the created order leads us to believe that Earth is extremely old. Genuine scientific investigation of God's world is an exciting enterprise that God wants his people to engage in. Instead of the flight-from reality "science" of young Earth creationism, the church and the world need more of the vigorous approach to both the creation and Scripture that we found in men of the past.

Wouldn't it be thrilling if Christians would stop expending energy espousing and defending the false conception of the biblical doctrine of creation? How much more satisfying it would be to expend our time in properly interpreting and applying the Bible in light of all the knowledge that God has given us, rather than in a vacuum. How much more satisfying it would be to expend our time in light of all the knowledge God has given us, and in uncovering the awesome, mysteries of an Earth that God in his overabounding love has actually given us! Vigorous Christian theology, biblical studies, geology and other natural sciences, unafraid of truth even when it surprises, are far more serviceable in effective evangelism and apologetics than the dream world of young-Earth creationism. In the end, Christian devotion to God's truth, not enslavement to tradition, leads to the greater glory of our Creator-our Maker, Defender, Redeemer and Friend.

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### **About the Authors**

Davis A. Young (Ph.D., Brown University) is Professor of Geology Emeritus of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His books include *John Calvin and the Natural World*, *The Biblical Flood: A Case Study of the Church's Response to Extra-biblical Evidence*, *Portraits of Creation: Biblical and Scientific Perspectives on the World's Formation and Science Held Hostage: What's Wrong with Creation Science and Evolutionism*.

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