



Since ancient times, a common sense, straightforward reading of Scripture has led Israelites and Christians to understand an approximate age of the universe. The cosmos was created in six 24-hour type days, and is only thousands of years old, not millions. With few exceptions, this is what our Church Fathers have always taught.

Since the 1800s, when Evolutionism became popular, various Christians have tried to harmonize it with Biblical beliefs. Although most Christians rejected atheistic Evolutionism, many accepted various important aspects of the theory, including the belief that the Earth was billions of years old. What most have done to harmonize the Bible with “modern” scientific theories is add God's supernatural power to an evolutionary process.

The three most common ways in which Christians have incorporated billions-of-years into the Bible is by Theistic Evolutionism, the Gap Theory, or Progressive Creationism (also called “Process Creation”). Of the three, Theistic Evolution is the most liberal theologically. Theistic Evolutionists often reject the entire Creation account. For some, the only active role for God is the He started the “Big Bang” and occasionally stepped-in to supersede natural processes.

The Gap Theory is a more conservative view, theologically. Both Gap Theorists and Progressive Creationists definitely consider themselves to be Bible-believing Christians. The Gap Theory's basic proposition is that there is a possible time gap of millions (or possibly billions) of years between [Genesis 1:1](#) & 1:2. There are many versions of the Gap Theory, but most agree that the time supposedly “required” by modern science can be put into this assumed gap. During this supposed time, many events took place which God did not tell us about.

Progressive Creationists take another approach. How do they insert billions-of-years into the Bible? They change the meaning of “day” in the creation account - from a single rotation of the Earth, to a long, indefinite period of time (perhaps hundreds of millions of years each). What happened during these long periods? Not all Progressive Creationists agree. Their opinions often hinge on whether they have a theologically liberal bent, or a conservative bent. The more liberal picture God as doing relatively little in the way of actual creative acts during the supposed billions of years of creation. God simply steps-in now and then, to create new life forms. The more conservative Progressive Creationists present God as doing many more creative miracles. That is, God creates the world in numerous progressive steps. That is why this belief is called “Progressive Creation” or “Process Creation.”

Although there is little widespread agreement among Progressive Creationists, they generally believe the following:

- *The “Big Bang” is interpreted as God's way of producing stars and galaxies through billions-of-years of natural processes.*
- *The Earth and universe are billions of years old.*
- *The days of Creation were overlapping periods of millions and billions of years.*

- *Death and bloodshed have existed from the very beginning of Creation and were not the result of Adam's sin. Man was created after the vast majority of earth's history of life and death had already taken place.*
- *The flood of Noah was local, not global and it had little affect on the Earth's geology which represents billions of years of history.*

It is obvious then that Progressive Creationism is a belief which opposes both atheistic evolutionism and historic Christianity's understanding of biblical creationism. The teachings of Progressive Creationism are not new or original, but only recently have the views of Progressive Creationism received unprecedented wide and favorable publicity through Christian radio, television and magazines. Because Progressive Creationists often present their views as being based on a literal interpretation of the Bible, they have been invited to speak at numerous prominent evangelical churches, schools and ministries.

There are many inconsistencies in the theory of Progressive Creation. According to many conservative theologians, the most dangerous of its teachings is the proposal that Adam and Eve were created after the majority of earth's history had already taken place, including eons of death among the animals. Their timeline includes millions of years of major disasters befalling the animals before Adam or sin, including disease, famines, volcanic destruction, hurricanes, tornadoes, asteroid impacts, supernovas etc. As a result, animals frequently became extinct, never to be seen by man. The belief that death existed prior to the fall undermines the Bible's clear teaching that death is a result of sin ([I Corinthians 15:21-22](#); [Romans 5:12](#)). Any theory which places man or animal death prior to the fall of Adam must be rejected.

Another concern for many Christians is the Progressive Creationist's belief that the "days" of creation in [Genesis 1](#) can be legitimately understood as long, undefined periods of time. This claim is impossible to support using sound hermeneutic principles (the science of understanding the Bible) and is contrary to the orthodox teachings of the Christian Church from the time of the apostles.

Clearly, Progressive Creationism is an attempt by many evangelical Christians to harmonize the teachings of modern science with the Bible. However, rather than confirming the truths of the Bible, Progressive Creationism supports the foundational tenets of evolutionary science and causes greater anxiety among believers that indeed God's word cannot be rightly understood by the common, untrained layperson. After-all, the "proofs" for Progressive Creationism come mainly from the field of science, not from the simple teachings of the Bible. In this way, Progressive Creation erects a subtle barrier between the believer and the Bible, a wall is constructed between the believer and God Himself.

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