


Creation, evolution and the scientific evidence

Paul Garner

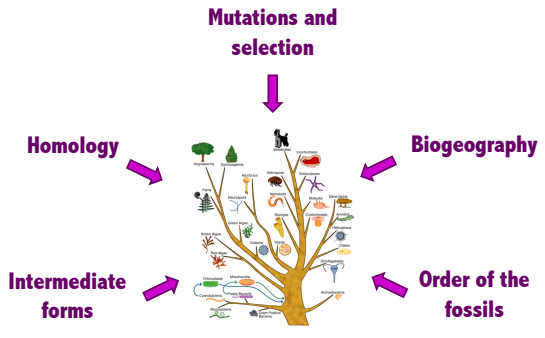


Biblical Creation Trust
biblicalcreationtrust.org

Credit: iStock Photo

1

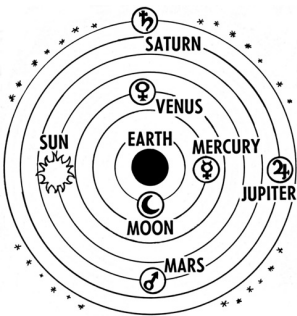
Evolution: a simple compelling idea



Credit: US Geological Survey/Creative Commons

2

Simple, compelling ... but wrong



- **Geocentrism**
 - The idea that the Earth is at the centre of the solar system.

Credit: Peponno Scott Foreman/Public domain

3

Handling conflicts: some principles for today

- We shouldn't allow science to *control* our biblical interpretations.
- We should allow the Bible to *challenge* the scientific consensus when necessary.
- We should leave room for *vulnerability*.



4

Handling conflicts: an example from archaeology

- Tel Dan stele commemorating the victory of an Aramaic king over the Israelites.
- Discovered in northern Israel in 1993.
- Dates to mid 8th century BC.
- Includes reference to 'the House of David,' the first such confirmation of David's essential historicity at any archaeological site.




Credit: Meitad Suchowolski / The Israel Museum, Jerusalem / Israel Antiquities Authority

5

Creationism: a failed project?

- How will we know whether better alternatives to evolution and an old earth are possible without looking?
- Creationism has *never* been seriously tried as a professional, multidisciplinary, research-based enterprise (until recently).



6



7

Building a research community

- New field and laboratory research.
- Multidisciplinary teams.
- Professional societies and conferences.
- Peer review.

8

Secular journals and conferences

- Interaction with evolutionary peers.

Credits: Institute for Creation Research.

9

Potential pitfalls: bias

- How can you do science when you start with the Bible?
- Bias is not unique to creationists!
 - ‘...even if there were no actual evidence in favour of the Darwinian theory (there is, of course) we should still be justified in preferring it over all rival theories.’

Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, 1986, p.287
- We all need bias-control strategies.

10

Potential pitfalls: miracles

- Aren't miracles a science show-stopper?
- Science can include the supernatural.
- Evidence can point to a miracle having occurred.
- But we need to formulate specific hypotheses that can be tested by scientific methods.

11

- If you can offer scientific arguments against something, then it's a scientific claim!

ARTICLE

Were Australopithecines Ape-Human Intermediates or Just Apes? A Test of Both Hypotheses Using the "Lucy" Skeleton

ABSTRACT

Mainstream scientists often claim that australopithecines such as the specimen nicknamed "Lucy" exhibit anatomy intermediate between that of apes and that of humans and use this as evidence that humans evolved from australopithecines, which evolved from apes. On the other hand, creationists reject evolution and claim that australopithecines are "just apes." Here, a point-by-point visual comparison with the skeleton of a chimpanzee, "Lucy," and a human is presented in order to evaluate both claims, treating them as rival hypotheses. The results support the hypothesis that australopithecines are unusually intermediate between apes and humans. Classroom applications of this test of hypotheses are also discussed.

Hundreds of australopithecine specimens are known, but to keep this study simple and to avoid overwhelming the nonspecialist reader, I chose to use a single australopithecine specimen: AL 288-1, nicknamed "Lucy" (discovered in Ethiopia in 1974 (Johansson et al., 1982)). AL 288-1 is particularly appropriate to use for this test of hypotheses, for several reasons. First, at 40% complete (Johansson et al., 1982), it is one of the most complete australopithecine skeletons known to date; most of the skull is missing, but the preserved portions of the jaw, dentition, vertebral column, pelvis, and limbs are sufficient to test the two hypotheses with

12

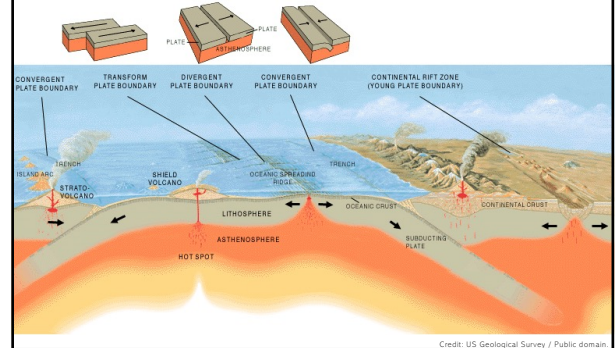
Building models, not bashing evolution

- A scientific model is a 'story' that brings coherence to a wide range of data.
- A good model seeks to explain lots of data within a single framework and to make testable predictions.
- Models provide the framework in which scientific research is conducted.

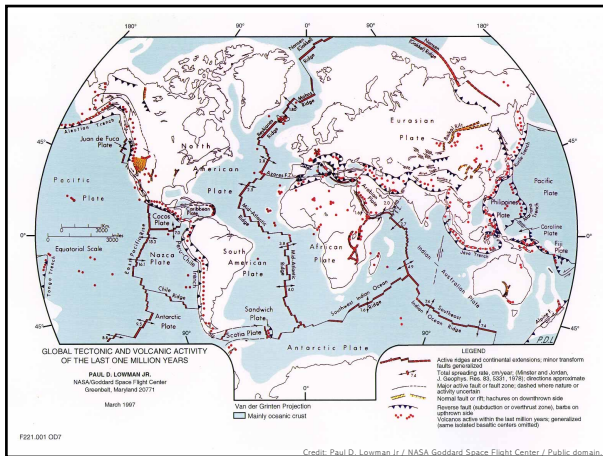


13

Case study: Plate tectonics

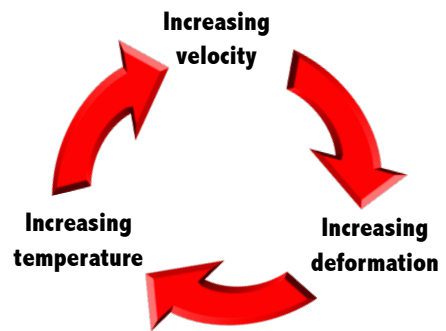


14

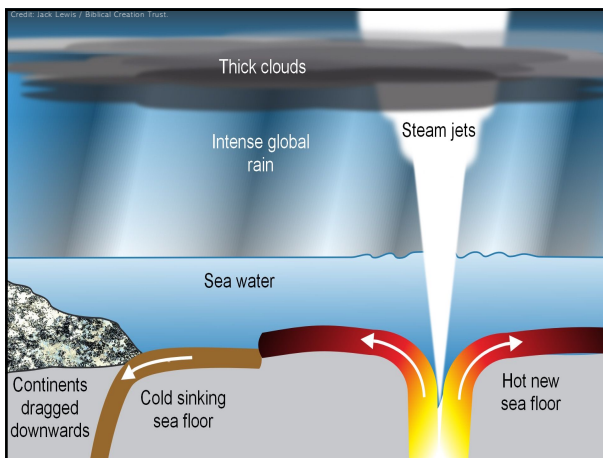


15

Thermal runaway



16



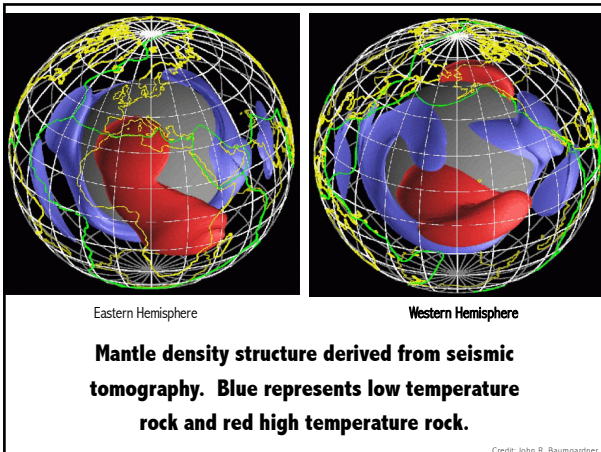
17

Plate tectonics explain a lot. Catastrophic plate tectonics explains even more

- Trans-ocean continental shapes
- Trans-ocean geology/paleontology
- Satellite-measured continental motion / Anomalies
- Compressional mountain belts / **W-P** / **Lo-T** minerals
- Off-shore sediment sources
- Sources for Permian glaciation
- Polar wander curves
- Ocean crust/tectonic composition
- Abyssal ocean depth
- Ridge and trench distribution / **Undeformed sediments**
- Ridge-parallel age
- Ridge-parallel magnetic striping / **Blockiness**
- Oceanic heat flow anomalies
- Oceanic gravity anomalies
- Andesitic volcano distribution
- Seamount submergence
- Transform faults
- Earthquake map distribution
- Earthquake depths
- Earthquake focal mechanisms
- Curvature of ocean faults
- Transform faults
- Upper mantle velocity anomalies / **670 km barrier**
- Flood basalts / **Kimberlites and diamonds**
- Hot spot tracks
- **Simulation moves continents properly**
- **Deep seismic tomography**
- **Detachment/rupture mechanisms**
- **Biblical chronology**
- **Rapid magnetic reversals**
- **Archeomagnetic intensities**
- **Historical magnetic intensity**
- **Trans-oceanic sedimentation**
- **Thick, uniform sedimentation**
- **Distant sediment provenance**
- **Fossil preservation**
- **Abundant paleontofossils**
- **Geological intensity trends**
- **Phanerozoic temperature trends**
- **Cape's rule**
- **Geosland hypothesis trends**
- **Ice age**
- **Tertiary precipitation trends**
- **Pluvial lakes**
- **Canyon formation**
- **Time distribution of caves**
- **Rapid desiccation**
- **Correct mountain rebound**



18



19

Creationist models

- Offer a positive approach to the data – data is to be explained not explained away.
- Are often similar to conventional models – but with interesting modifications.
- Allow us to engage with new questions.

20

The big questions in creation biology

- Systematics
- Design
- Natural evil
- Speciation
- Biogeography

Available from isgeneshistory.com (US) / 10ofthose.com (UK)

21

Let's Talk Creation

Learn, Grow, and Worship

LISTEN OR WATCH

NEW EPISODES EVERY FORTNIGHT

letstalkcreation.org
youtube.com/letstalkcreation

22

Take-home messages

- Building creationist models is more challenging than poking holes in evolution – but ultimately more productive.
- If our models are wrong that doesn't invalidate the Bible – we seek to make our models consistent with the Bible but they're not demanded by the Bible.
- Science is surely richer as a result of us doing this research – creationists are asking questions and collecting data that no one else is!
- The progress we've made is encouraging but there are still lots of unanswered questions!

Credit: iStock Photo

23

Biblical Creation Trust

P.O. Box 325, Ely, CB7 5YH
biblicalcreationtrust.org
 f [biblicalcreationtrust](https://www.facebook.com/biblicalcreationtrust)
 t [@bct_origins](https://twitter.com/bct_origins)

24