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Science Concerns

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Chapter 13 Science Concerns

75) *The Bible and LDS scriptures teach that there was no death before the fall.*

Answer: There is no official doctrine regarding the antiquity or creation of the Earth or life on Earth. We know that much of what we read in the scriptures is allegorical or symbolic. Many LDS believe in both Adam and Eve and that science is correct regarding the progression of life on Earth. Ancient societies (as well as modern societies) understood God’s revelations as well as His creations from within a context of their worldviews (here we go again... their “language”).

Some Biblical scholars (such as non-LDS John Walton) argue that the creation account of Genesis is based on—what he calls—a functional creation. When we “create” a committee we are not creating a physical structure but rather organizing things (in the case of a committee those “things” would be people) to populate and steward the organization.

Those who wrote the Old Testament believed that the creation was an on-going process, an enterprise in which we are intimately involved—just like a committee continues to function long after it’s “created.” Instead of seeing the creation accounts like modern people read them today (as creating a product with an *Erector Set*), ancient peoples “believed that something existed not by virtue of its material properties, but by virtue of its having a function in an ordered system.”³⁵

“Creation,” notes Dr. Walton, “thus constitutes bringing order to the cosmos from an originally nonfunctional condition.... Consequently, to create something (cause to exist) in the ancient world means to give it function, not material properties.”³⁶

The function of creation was to give order, roles, organization, and jurisdiction to the cosmos—which includes Earth and all life. The story in Genesis described the organizational powers between us and God while setting a pattern to guide us in our relationship with the divine. Dr. Walton explains that the creation of Adam and Eve has archetypal significance and they stand as representations for all of God’s children.

Humankind is connected to the ground from which we are drawn. Womankind is connected to mankind from whom she is drawn. In both male and female forms, humankind is connected to God in whose image all are made. As such they have the privilege of procreation, the role of subduing and ruling, and a status in the garden serving sacred space (Gen 2: 15)... Neither the materials nor the roles are descriptive only of the first individuals. This creation account gives people their identity and specifies their connectivity to everything around them.³⁷

By understanding that the scriptures are not meant to reveal the scientific and mechanical workings of the universe we are free to accept or reject pre-Adamites, evolution, and death before the fall, based on intellectual arguments instead of from a position that assumes we have infallible

scriptures and infallible ancient prophets.

76) Science has proven that there was no worldwide flood.

Answer: There is no official doctrine regarding the scope or depth of Noah's flood. Many LDS believe that the flood was localized—to Noah, the “earth” (and this is supported by how the word is used in Hebrew) would have referred to the land in his vicinity. Noah would not have known about the earth in a global sense (as we do today). If everything he saw was underwater, to his world the “earth” would have been flooded.

77) Science discredits the Bible.

Answer: The Bible is not a history book or a science book and doesn't claim to be. Ancient cultures had a much different view of literature than we have today. God did not (and does not) reveal every detail of every scientific or historical fact to every prophet (there is no need for such revelations). Biblical authors had pre-scientific worldviews and wrote according to how they understood things in their day. As Galileo said, paraphrasing Cardinal Baronius (the Vatican's librarian), the intent of scripture is “to teach us how one goes to heaven, not how heaven goes.”³⁸