The Chicken or the Egg?
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When God created the earth, it was fully functional in every way. Adam and Eve walked into a complete and mature garden, with “no assembly required.” Trees were producing fruit, animals were full-grown and ready to reproduce, and the earth was thriving with life. Everything was ready for the habitation and rule by God’s vice-regents.

Adam and Eve didn’t need to wait on creation to “catch up.” When God declared His creation was *very good*, that affirmation included completion and maturity—a maturity marked by the appearance of age. John MacArthur explains . . .

Read John’s article, then visit the comment thread to post *your* thoughts.

One rather obvious fact ignored by many is that the universe was mature when it was created. God created it with the *appearance* of age. When He created trees and animals, for example, He created them as mature, fully developed organisms. According to the biblical account, He did not create just seeds and cells. He certainly did not plant a single cell programmed to evolve itself into a variety of creatures. He made trees with already-mature fruit (Genesis 1:11). He didn't merely create an egg; He made chickens already full grown. (Thus Genesis 1:21 plainly answers the familiar conundrum.) He created Adam full grown and fully capable of marriage and procreation.

Did Adam have a navel? It's worth noting that some modern creationists, including Ken Ham (whose work I have the utmost respect for), believe the answer is no, because the navel is a scar left from the umbilical cord, and a created being would have no use for such a scar. (see Answers in Genesis)

The question of whether Adam had a navel may sound frivolous, but in medieval and renaissance times it was often the subject of intense debate. Artists who depicted Adam and Eve in the garden were faced with a theological dilemma: Should our first parents be portrayed with navels, or not? Not a few artists solved the problem by painting fig leaves large enough to extend above where the navel would be. But in his famous painting that is the centerpiece of the Sistine Chapel's ceiling, Michelangelo gave Adam an impressive belly-button. And he was fiercely criticized for it by some of the sterner theologians of his day.

But is it really so far-fetched to think that God would have created Adam with a navel? After all, the navel is an integral part of normal human anatomy. The structure of our abdominal muscles and vascular system is designed to accommodate the navel. I know of no necessary theological or biblical

reason to *insist* that Adam and Eve could not have had them. Our first parents surely appeared like normal adults in every respect. They were probably given calluses to protect the soles of their feet like any normal adult, and the edges of their teeth were no doubt smooth, as if from normal use, rather than sharp, as if they had never been used.

Of course, the whole question of whether Adam and Eve had belly-buttons (or calluses or smooth edges on their teeth) is purely speculative. Scripture simply does not ad-dress the issue. So while the question itself is intriguing, there's no need to revive a trivial debate with Medieval intensity.

But the fact remains that Adam certainly had many features associated with maturity. He wasn't created as an embryo or an infant. He was a fully-grown man. There is no reason to doubt that he had normal adult features; he certainly would have had fully developed muscles; and we know he was created with enough knowledge to tend the garden, name the animals, and talk with God. Without any growth, history, or experience, he was still a mature adult man.

Suppose a modern scientist could travel back in time and arrive in the garden moments after Adam's creation. If he examined Adam, he would see adult features (perhaps a navel, calluses, or smooth edges on his teeth—or at the very least, an adult frame and musculature). If he could converse with Adam, he would find a man with adult knowledge and fully-formed language skills. But if he interpreted those things as conclusive proof that Adam was more than one hour old, he would simply be wrong. When we're dealing with things created *ex nihilo,* evidences of maturity or signs of age do not constitute proof of antiquity.

And what if that same time-travelling scientist did a botanical study of a newly-created oak tree? He would observe the size of the tree, note the tree's fruit (acorns) and probably conclude that the tree itself was many years old. What if he cut down one of the trees to examine its growth rings? Would he find growth rings inside, indicating that the tree had been there for many seasons? Why not? Those rings of xylem and phloem are not only signs of the tree's age, but they also compose the tree's vascular system. They are essential to the strength of a large tree as well. But if our imaginary scientist concluded on the basis of tree rings that the tree was 90 years old, he would be wrong again. The garden itself was created mature, fully functional, and therefore with the appearance of age.

The garden was no doubt filled with creatures that had every appearance of age. On day seven, when the Lord rested from His labor, everything was fully mature and fully functional. The eagles soaring overhead might appear to be 30 years old, but they were less than a week old. Elephants roaming around might have had full tusks and appeared to be 50 years old, but they were merely one *day* old. Any mountains, rivers, or other geological features probably also appeared to have been there for some time. There were no doubt beautiful waterfalls and canyons, and other features that the typical geologist would surmise had been formed by several ages of wind and water or volcanic

eruptions and earthquakes. But the fact is that they were all made in one day. And when Adam looked up into the heavens and saw that incredible expanse with millions of bright stars, he was seeing light from millions of light years away—even though those stars had all had been there less than four days. The light he saw was itself part of God's creation (Genesis 1:3).

All those marks of age and maturity are part of every creative miracle. When Jesus turned water to wine, for example, He utterly bypassed the fermentation and aging process. He made wine instantly from water, and those who tasted it testified that it was the best wine of all (John 2:10)—meaning it was mature and well-seasoned already, even though it was an instantaneous creation. When He multiplied the loaves and fishes, He created bread and fish that were already cooked and ready to eat.

We certainly expect people who reject Scripture and despise God to accept the notion that the universe has existed for aeons and aeons. For obvious reasons, they want to eliminate every supernatural explanation for the origin of humanity. They don't want any binding moral law or omnipotent Judge to whom they must be accountable. So of course they embrace the naturalistic theories of evolution and an ancient earth with great enthusiasm.

But it is shocking and disturbing to see how the idea that the earth is billions of years old has begun to dominate even the evangelical Christian community. In recent years a number of leading evangelical theologians, Bible commentators, and apologists have begun arguing that it is now necessary to go beyond the plain meaning of the creation account in Genesis and try to adapt our understanding of creation as closely as possible to the theories currently in vogue in secular science. If we insist on a literal six-day creation and a young age for the universe, they claim, we will sacrifice our academic credibility and weaken our testimony to those educated in the theory of evolution.

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