

Summary

Mortenson, Terry. *The Fall and the Problem of Millions of Years of Natural Evil.* [Answers in Genesis](#).

This article addresses a controversial issue within the church: the question of whether millions of years of animal death, disease, predation, extinction, and natural disasters (such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and tsunamis) occurred before the Fall of Man. Mortenson defends the historically orthodox Christian understanding of the Fall, arguing that Christians must reject the belief in millions of years of natural evil before Adam's creation to maintain a consistent biblical hermeneutic and uphold the inerrancy of Scripture. He asserts that belief in young-earth creationism is biblically required.

Mortenson begins by citing Tim Keller, who highlights the theological dilemma of reconciling God's goodness with a world filled with "violence, predation, and death." Mortenson notes that while Keller outlines the problem, he does not provide a solution.

The article methodically examines the incompatibility of millions of years of death and suffering with the biblical narrative. Mortenson argues that evolutionary views of origins and development conflict with Scripture's teaching that death and suffering entered the world only as a result of Adam's sin. He addresses objections to the idea of no death or suffering before the Fall and outlines the consequences of the Fall for both humans and the natural world. Using passages from both the Old and New Testaments, Mortenson explains the effects of the Fall and discusses the restoration of creation at Christ's return. He emphasizes that the redeemed cosmos will surpass Adam's pre-Fall world because there will be no curse, and humanity will be incapable of sin (drawing from Acts 3:20-21, Colossians 1:15-20, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21-22, and others).

Mortenson also addresses textual and grammatical objections, such as the interpretation of the verbs in Genesis 1:26 and 28, which some argue suggest resistance in the natural world from the beginning. He refutes this view by clarifying the text and contextual usage of these words.

After countering these objections, Mortenson raises his own questions to challenge the concept of pain, suffering, and death before the Fall and to reinforce his thesis of "no natural evil" prior to Adam's sin.

Mortenson concludes with a strong rejection of the millions-of-years framework, stating:

"If the Bible's teaching on death, the Curse, and the final redemptive work of Christ is true, as it surely is, then the millions-of-years idea must be a grand myth, really a lie and one of the greatest deceptions designed (by men or demons) to destroy faith in the Bible and the gospel. Conversely, if the millions of years of natural evil really happened, then the Bible's teaching on these subjects must be utterly false. But if so, this turns the gospel into the greatest deception, which in turn has great implications for the character of God."

The article concludes by appealing to the nature and character of God. Mortenson argues that believing in millions of years of suffering and death before Adam's sin portrays God as a monstrous figure unworthy of worship. He asserts that Christians must never compromise

biblical truth to accommodate secular evolutionary philosophy, as doing so undermines God's integrity and diminishes the Bible's authority.