

Session 1 Notes—The Existence of God

Series Objective: To review some of the evidence that supports the Biblical Christian worldview, so that we can be confident that God’s story, as described in the Bible, actually happened and is true.

Session 1: The existence of God—Using three arguments for the existence of God, we will arrive at what must be some of the characteristics of the cause of the universe; using logic, reasoning, and science.

Session 2: Creation and Evolution—We’ll talk about what Natural Selection and Mutations really are, and what Biblical creationists believe. We’ll look at rock dating methods and the fossil record, and wrap it up with why it all matters.

Session 3: The historical reliability of the New Testament—We’ll answer two questions: (1) Is the New Testament that we have today an accurate copy of the original documents? And (2) Can we be confident that those original documents told the truth?

1. The Cosmological Argument

- Everything that had a beginning had a cause.
- The universe had a beginning.
- Therefore, the universe had a cause.

The big question: Why is there *something* rather than *nothing*?

Starting in the early 1900s, we started to understand that our universe once had a beginning:

1. Einstein’s work on Relativity in 1916 indicated an expansion of the universe.
2. Hubble confirmed it when he discovered the Red Shift in 1927.
3. The second law of Thermodynamics tells us that the universe is “running down,” so there must have been a time when it was fully “wound up.”
4. If the universe had existed since eternity past, then we would have had to cross an infinite number of moments to get to where we are. This isn’t possible. So since we are here, there must have been a starting point in time.

The Big Bang model indicates that the entire universe once originated at a point called a singularity in which the volume approaches zero. This would imply zero material inside. So the entire material universe has essentially exploded into existence from a state of no matter.

What must the cause of the universe look like?

- **Eternal, with no beginning.** Or else it too would have needed a cause.
- **Physical or non-material.** Since it has existed since eternity in the past, it would have been subject to the same laws of decay as the rest of the material universe.
- **All powerful.** To be an adequate cause, it must have been very powerful.

- **Personal.** The start of the universe is a one-time event. This implies that a conscious, thinking agent made a decision at some point before the beginning of the universe, to cause it.

Objections:

Most speculations concerning the cause of the Big Bang involve pre-existing eternal matter or energy. Common are oscillating models that involve cycles of expanding and contracting universes. This idea is nicknamed the Big Crunch. But:

- The universe is accelerating in its expansion, so we know forces of expansion far and away exceed forces of contraction. This would tell us our universe will not contract.
- Oscillating models require an infinite regress of past events, which isn't possible.

2. The Design (Teleological) Argument

- Every design had a designer.
- The universe has highly complex design.
- Therefore, the universe had a designer.

We all recognize design: A highly improbable state of affairs that has been arranged for a purpose. In other words, chance is not a good explanation for the situation.

Since the 1950s, astrophysicists have been discovering characteristics of the universe that appear to be highly fine-tuned for life to exist. There are more than 40 identified, with some (Hugh Ross for example) estimating that there are over 100. If any one of them were off, life would be impossible. Examples:

Force of Gravity: Fine-tuned to within $1 : 10^{40}$

Cosmological Constant: Fine-tuned to within $1 : 10^{53}$

What must the cause of the universe look like?

- **Intelligent, or all knowing.** To create such a complex universe.
- **Purposeful.** To plan it ahead of time.

Objections:

1. We shouldn't be surprised, because any combination of factors will be special, like a lottery ticket. But the difference is the winning combination allows for life to form. If any of the numbers on the winning ticket were different, then life could not exist.
2. We live in one of an infinite number of universes (multi-verse theory). But there is no independent evidence of a multiverse. Also, it complicates the problem, because it requires an explanation for some kind of machine that generates multiple universes.

3. The Moral Argument

- All people are conscious of an objective moral law.

- Objective moral laws imply a moral lawgiver.
- Therefore, there must be a supreme moral lawgiver.

Objective moral law: Consists of moral values that are right and wrong, and are true, just like mathematics is true. For example, Stealing, Lying, and Torture are all wrong. On the other hand, Generosity, Sacrifice, and Equality are all right. These things are true despite anybody's opinion on the matter.

No Objective Moral Law: This would be Moral Relativism, a belief that an objective moral law does not exist. It would mean that moral values concerning things that are right or wrong exist only in the opinions of different people. There is no objective reference point that provides a standard. In this situation, moral values are preferences, like ice cream. One likes vanilla, another likes chocolate.

Moral relativism is self-refuting and does not correspond to the real world. Therefore, an objective moral code exists. We must account for where it came from. Moral codes are not things that people have *developed* over time, they are truths that we *discover*.

The moral law is above God, nor a code that God created for people to be subject to. Christianity says that it is God himself who is the perfect standard of right and wrong. He is absolutely morally pure. It's not that God possesses the characteristics of moral perfection. Rather it is in his very nature.

What must the cause of the universe look like?

- **Absolutely morally pure.**
- **Infinitely just.**
- **Infinitely loving.**
- **All good.**

4. Review

We identified what the cause of the universe must be like, and it is starting to look like the God of the Bible. But we did not use the Bible to get here. We used sound reasoning, logic, and some science. However, we could go to the Bible to see if that is what the God of the Bible looks like (the following passages are taken from the NLT).

Eternal, with no beginning: "Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, you are God." Psalm 90:2.

Physical or non-material: "For God is Spirit, so those who worship him just worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:24.

All powerful: "These are just the beginning of all that he does, merely a whisper of his power. Who, then, can comprehend the thunder of his power?" Job 26:14.

Personal: "So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:27. (We are personal beings. Since we are created in God's image, who we are is rooted in the personhood of God.)

Intelligent, or all knowing: “My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.” Isaiah 55:8.

Purposeful: “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11.

All good: “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.” Psalm 107:1.

5. Final Objection:

How can a good God allow so much suffering in the world if he has the power to stop it?

God loves us and would like for us to love him too. But a forced love is no love at all. So when God created us he gave us a very good but powerful gift: The freedom to choose. Unfortunately many people exercise their freedom such that they terribly hurt other people, or greatly damage, even ruin, their own lives. Much of the suffering that exists in the world is due to our own freedom. God knew what could happen, what would happen, but it was a risk he was willing to take because he valued our freedom that much.

What about diseases or natural disasters that aren't anybody's fault in particular?

Christianity would say that these things are a result of all of creation being affected by Adam and Eve's original sin. Romans 8:20: “Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse.”

When God created everything it was a perfect paradise. But when Adam and Eve chose to take life on their own terms against God's wishes, they ruined everything. This is when sin and all of its consequences—sickness, disease, pain, suffering, violence, even death—entered into the world for the first time. Sin entered into Adam and Eve, and all of us through the ages inherited this sin nature from them.

One day God will restore creation back to what it used to be and was always meant to be. but sin won't be allowed inside. This is bad news for us, since there is nothing we can do to remove the sin which is inside us.

But the good news in the Bible, called the Gospel, is that Jesus came to provide a rescue plan. He can remove our sin and make us right with God, and will, if we trust him to do it.

The Christian faith is not a blind faith but a *trust* based on the evidence. We have enough evidence in nature to know that an intelligent creator must exist. When we go to the Bible, knowing that it is reliable based on available evidence, we can know the rest of the story. Then we can make the decision to put our *trust* in Jesus that what he did will save us from our sin problem and put us right with God. But because he loves us, God gives us the freedom to choose.

Session 2 Notes—Genesis and Evolution

Objectives:

- To be equipped with questions for evolution that reveal its most serious problems.
- To understand the Biblical Creation model.
- To have a list of good resources to get more information.

All of us should be prepared to answer if somebody asks us: “What do you believe, and why?”

1. Why is evolution considered a fact?

Science today is based on Naturalism, and excludes any possibility of the supernatural, or God.

Naturalism: A philosophy or worldview that says there is no God, no supernatural. Nature is all there is.

Evolution is considered a fact because if there is no God (Naturalism) then evolution must be true because it's the best explanation available that explains how we got here. This is why it is presented as a fact in science classes.

2. Experimental and Historical Science.

- Operational or Experimental science – Deals with observable and testable phenomena in the present. The scientific method applies.
- Historical or Forensic Science – Investigates past events. The scientific method does not apply. If investigating origins, no one was there to see it, and experiments aren't possible to repeat it.

When most scientists shift from studying experimental science to historical science, they bring their rule for Naturalism with them, an assumption that there is no God. It is a pre-supposition, or bias.

3. Is Evolution Science, while a belief in Creation is Religion?

Those who believe in evolution claim “We're just looking at the Facts.”

But everyone is looking at the same facts, or put more accurately, evidence. Example: A fossil is the evidence. How it got there could be “the fact.” Evidence is always interpreted into “facts” based on a person's pre-suppositions. If a person with a pre-supposition for Naturalism is evaluating evidence, their explanation will involve a cause that excludes any possibility of the supernatural, or God.

Question 1: How do you know that?

When somebody makes a claim, try to find out why they believe what they are saying, or where they got that information. You may find that their source is not reliable.

Question 2: Could your source be biased?

We know that all science textbooks will be biased for Naturalism. Most magazines and TV shows, unless known to hold to the Biblical worldview, are likely to be biased.

4. Natural Selection and Mutations

We now know that DNA is an extremely sophisticated digital code containing vast amounts of information. The human genome contains 3 billion letters of information, and if a human DNA molecule were uncoiled, it would stretch 7 feet. The DNA molecule inside the cell provides the information for a given organism to develop body structures as it grows.

If evolution is true, we went from non-living chemicals to the first living cell, to all of life on earth. Evolution must provide a mechanism by which all of the genetic information in all of life on earth has come from nothing.

- Charles Darwin recognized adaptations in finch beaks, and suggested that small changes could accumulate over time to cause bigger changes, leading from one kind of animal to another.

Darwinism: Natural Selection + Time = Evolution from one animal kind to another.

- Mendelian genetics tells us that Natural Selection only works with genetic information that is already available, and that as animals adapt, they lose information.

- The New Darwinism says:

Natural Selection + Mutations + Time = Evolution from one animal kind to another.

- But mutations do not add genetic information. They are DNA copy mistakes and gradually corrupt the information in DNA.
- There can be beneficial mutations, such as beetles on a windy island, or bacterial resistance to antibiotics. But none represent an increase in genetic information.
- There is no known mechanism that increases genetic information over time.

5. The Creation Model.

- According to Genesis, God created “...each according to its kind.” God would have created the original animal kinds with vast amounts of genetic information, because he would want them to be able to adapt to different environmental conditions.
- It is estimated that there were about 8,000 original land animal and bird kinds saved on the ark, for example. All of the land animals and birds on earth today would be descended from these original kinds.
- The creation “orchard” model is in harmony with natural selection and mutations, because there is no need for the increase of genetic information. Rather, there is a decrease in genetic information as animal kinds quickly adapt to different conditions according to natural selection.

Example: The dog kind has produced Wolves, Coyotes, dingoes, Jackals, foxes, and domestic dogs.

- The ark was 450 x 75 x 45 feet. Volume calculations show that it could hold about 125,000 animals the size of a sheep. With approximately 8,000 animal kinds to save, 16,000 animals would be needed on the ark. The median size of all the animals on the ark is estimated to be about the size of a small rat, with only 11% much bigger than a sheep. See more information about the ark here: <http://creation.com/images/pdfs/cabook/chapter13.pdf>
- Dinosaurs would have been saved on the ark. There were an estimated 30 original dinosaur kinds, with an average size of a sheep. Most of the dinosaurs were small, and the large dinosaurs could have been brought on board as juveniles.

6. Science textbooks.

- Science books can be misleading because examples for evolution are examples of natural selection with no information created. There is a subtle suggestion that the small changes seen as animals adapt (losing information) will accumulate over time to produce greater complexity (more information), but there is no evidence of this.

Question 3: Where does all the information come from?

Scientists know that neither natural selection nor mutations provide the increase in information required for evolution from simple to complex. There is no known mechanism that provides the new information required to go from non-living chemicals with no DNA, to the simplest cell with 580,000 DNA letters, to a human with 3 Billion DNA letters. Yet evolutionists still hang onto natural selection and mutations because it's all they have.

7. The age of the earth.

- The age of the earth is mostly derived from the rock layers that are found in the geologic column. They are presumed to be millions (and billions) of years old put down by very slow and gradual deposition.
- Geologists are making an assumption that the earth was shaped by the same forces we see today, so the process must have taken many millions of years. This is called Uniformitarianism.
- Charles Lyell played a key part in establishing the assumption of uniformitarianism with his book *Principles of Geology*. But his book was not so much about reporting observations, rather a way of explaining them through a new interpretive framework. The book was a masterpiece of persuasion and the idea took root. (Lyell was also a trained attorney).
- The Biblical view is that most of the rock layers were put down during Noah's flood, which lasted about a year. Fossils are plants and animals that appear in the order in which they were buried.
- When the assumption of uniformitarianism is removed, there is little reason to believe the rock layers are older than the Biblical timeline of 6000 years. However, evolutionists will point to rock dating methods as proof to support their idea of deep time.

8. Radiometric Dating.

- Scientists cannot measure the age of a rock. Instead, they measure chemicals in the rock and calculate an estimated age. Scientists look at radioactive elements that are in the process of changing from one element (parent) to another (daughter). An hourglass is a good illustration. Theoretically, if they know the rate of change from parent to daughter element, then they can calculate when the decay process started with only parent material present. This is presumably when the rock hardened from a molten state.
- Carbon-14 is one form of radiometric dating and is used for samples of once living material, such as fossils of plants or bones.
- Radiometric dating relies on 3 unprovable assumptions:
 - a. The amount of parent and daughter material are known at the start.
 - b. The decay rate has always been the same as measured in the lab today.
 - c. There has been no contamination in parent or daughter elements over time.

It is known that all 3 assumptions have problems, causing resulting calculations to be off. But one need only look at the results to understand the unreliability. Samples from known lava flows show test results of millions of years older than they are. Also, samples within the same rock layers show conflicting dates.

The bottom line: Dating methods *do not prove* long ages. Rather, there is reason to believe they are highly unreliable.

An excellent explanation of radiometric dating can be found in this documentary: *Evolution's Achilles' Heels*, Available in the "Store" at Creation.com, as a DVD or MP4 download.

The following web site is a good source for more information on radiometric dating:
<http://creation.com/radiometric-dating-questions-and-answers>

9. Evidence against slow deposition.

There is abundant evidence that causes real problems for the assumption of slow and gradual deposition, and is powerful evidence for a young earth and the global flood.

101 examples of evidence for a young earth: <http://creation.com/age-of-the-earth>

Evidence for the Flood:

<https://answersingenesis.org/the-flood/geologic-evidences-for-the-genesis-flood/>

Question 4: Millions of years? How did they get that?

When hearing a claim of an old age, it can be worth trying to get to the root source of information used to justify the claim. Sometimes it is very difficult to get this information because it is not made easily available. Or sometimes it is just the result of somebody's pre-supposition of long ages. If the claim is

based on radiometric dating, we know that the age is just an estimate, not proof. Radiometric dating has a known record of serious reliability problems.

10. The fossil Record – What does it really show?

- Sudden appearance of many kinds of animals, without sign of prior forms (birds, turtles, bats).
- Long periods, many millions of years, of no change (This is called Stasis).
- Extinction.
- Lack of transitional forms, such as from fish to amphibian, reptile to bird, reptile to mammal.

Question 7: Where are all the transitional fossils?

There are claims of many transitional forms, but the key is to ask for examples. There are really just a handful of them, and all are highly challenged within the scientific community. To research supposed transitions or “missing links”, I recommend entering their names in the search fields of either of these sites: Creation.com or AnswersinGenesis.org

11. Conclusions.

- Summary of the 5 Big Questions for Evolution:
 1. How do you know that? – Is the source reliable?
 2. Could your source be biased? – Is a claimed “fact” really a biased interpretation of the evidence?
 3. Where does all the information in DNA come from? – The theory of evolution says that Natural Selection and Mutations enable the information gain to go from simple to complex. We we now know that neither of these provides for an increase in information.
 4. Millions of years? Exactly how did they get that? – The only science supporting a pre-supposition of uniformitarianism is radiometric dating, which is known to have huge errors.
 5. Where are all the transitional fossils? -- Only a handful of examples are provided, which are highly challenged. There should be thousands available if evolution were true.
- We have 2 different creation stories, Genesis and Evolution. Evolution must say that everything created itself. Or that nothing created everything from nothing. Genesis says “In the beginning, God...” The Genesis account is better supported by real science and the evidence.

12. Why is it all important?

- Whether the earth is young or old is a very sensitive topic within the church. But it is not an essential doctrine. In other words, a person can believe in one view or the other and still be saved. The fact of creation is more important than the time of creation, and it is not an issue over which the church should be divided.
- But when Christians try to insert millions of years into the creation account, the question would be: Why? Maybe because it is easy to be persuaded that science has proven millions of years. But a history of millions of years *has not* been proven. We as Christians do not need to believe it.

- The Biblical writers and Jesus considered Genesis to be real history. So did the early church leaders. See: <http://creation.com/genesis-bible-authors-believed-it-to-be-history>
- The majority of Hebrew scholars consider the Hebrew word for “day” as used in the creation account in Genesis to mean a 24 hour day. See: <http://creation.com/genesis-is-history>
<http://creation.com/creation-compromises-questions-and-answers>

Inserting millions of years into the creation account can be problematic for the integrity of the Scripture and the Gospel message. Here’s why:

The Bible is clear that Adam’s sin brought death and all the rest of sin’s consequences into the world. (See Romans 5:12). The gospel message is that Jesus came to provide a rescue from that sin condition which affects all of us. But if there were millions of years of violence and death before Adam, it would mean the Bible is wrong. If death was just a part of God’s creation from the beginning, then Adam’s sin has lost its significance. So why would we need a savior?

See the *Creation Answers Book* chapter 2: <http://creation.com/images/pdfs/cabook/chapter2.pdf>
Also see: <http://creation.com/Did-god-create-over-billions-of-years>

To see how the Bible teaches that the earth is approximately 6000 years old, see:
<http://creation.com/6000-years>

The good news is that we don’t have to believe in millions of years because it hasn’t been proven. On the contrary, there is abundance evidence that creates enormous problems for long ages, and points to a young earth and Noah’s flood. We can read Genesis in a straightforward way, and take God for his word.

Session 3 Notes—Reliability of the New Testament

Objective: To show that the New Testament is historically reliable. We can be confident that the New Testament we have today accurately describes the events that happened at that time in history.

We will look at 2 Questions:

- Do we have accurate copies of the original documents that were written down in the first century?
- Can we be confident that those documents told the truth?

1. Do we have accurate copies?

We don't have originals anymore, which is the case with other documents from that period. But scholars can very accurately re-construct originals if they have many copies that were made soon after the originals. Copies can be compared to each other to fill in gaps and identify errors.

- Up until the 1800s, we didn't have many copies of early manuscripts. But then archaeology as a science developed, and the search was on.
- Now we have
 - Over 100 papyrus fragments
 - Over 300 Codices or Uncials
 - Fragments of books, starting from c. 50 AD
 - Complete NT books starting from 100 AD
 - Most of the NT starting from 150 AD
 - Complete New Testaments starting from 225 AD

Total Greek manuscripts: 5,366

Total including other languages: 25,800

This far and away exceeds the number of early copies of any other ancient documents of that period. The closest is Homer's Iliad, with 1800 copies and a time gap of 400 years between the original and the earliest copy.

- Having many copies protects against mistakes or intentional, fraudulent changes.
- Claims of large numbers of errors are not well founded. Most of "errors" are really variations in spelling, or synonyms. Very few involve meaning, and those are noted in our modern Bibles. None affect any Christian doctrine.
- Cumulative errors in translations, as seen in the "Telephone Game" are not an issue, because our modern translations are derived from the earliest available manuscripts, not each other in sequence.

Conclusion to Question 1: Many early copies (manuscripts) of the original New Testament documents give us very high confidence that the New Testament we have today matches the original documents written down in the first century.

2. Do the original documents tell the truth?

Following are 5 reasons we can be confident the documents tell the truth:

A. They were written soon after the events, so could not be legend.

- Most of the New Testament books were written within 30-40 years of the events. This is significant because it means the narratives and claims could be verified by many eyewitnesses.
- There wasn't enough time for legend to replace real history. That takes 2-3 generations. Those who would desire to revise history can not get away with it while eye witnesses are still alive.

B. The writings contain eyewitness testimony, either written by eye witnesses or their contemporaries who could interview them.

C. The writers demonstrate honesty and accuracy.

- Luke is known to be very accurate with many details in the Gospel of Luke and Acts. He names thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities and nine islands without an error. In addition the New Testament writers include the names of 30 historically confirmed people. This is important evidence the accounts were not lies. If they were, the writers would have blown their credibility with contemporary audiences by implicating real people in a fictional story—especially people of notoriety and power.
- Church tradition tells us that nearly all of the apostles were tortured and died for their belief in the risen Jesus. (Only John died a natural death, exiled on the island of Patmos). There is no historical evidence that any of them denied their story. This is different than, for example, a Muslim dying in a suicide bombing. The apostles' claim was that they saw and interacted with the risen Jesus, so they would have known they were dying for a lie.

D. The writers challenge their audiences (some of them hostile) to verify the writers' claims by checking with eye witnesses.

E. Sources outside the Bible support the narratives.

- There are 10 non-Christian writers who mention Jesus within 150 years of his life. The following information can be gleaned from these writings:

Jesus lived during the time of Tiberius Caesar.

He lived a virtuous life.

He was a wonder-worker.

He had a brother named James.

He was acclaimed to be the Messiah.

He was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He was crucified on the eve of the Jewish Passover.

Darkness and an earthquake occurred when he died.

His disciples believed he rose from the dead.
His disciples were willing to die for their belief.
Christianity spread rapidly as far as Rome.
His disciples denied the Roman gods and worshiped Jesus as God.

-- The field of Biblical archaeology is large and growing. Archaeological finds continually confirm the Biblical accounts. Books on Biblical archaeology are available, and even an Archaeological Study Bible.

Conclusion to Question 2: Early testimony with demonstrated accuracy and honesty, supported by external sources, provides confidence the accounts are historically true.

But people have a problem believing the accounts because of the miracles.

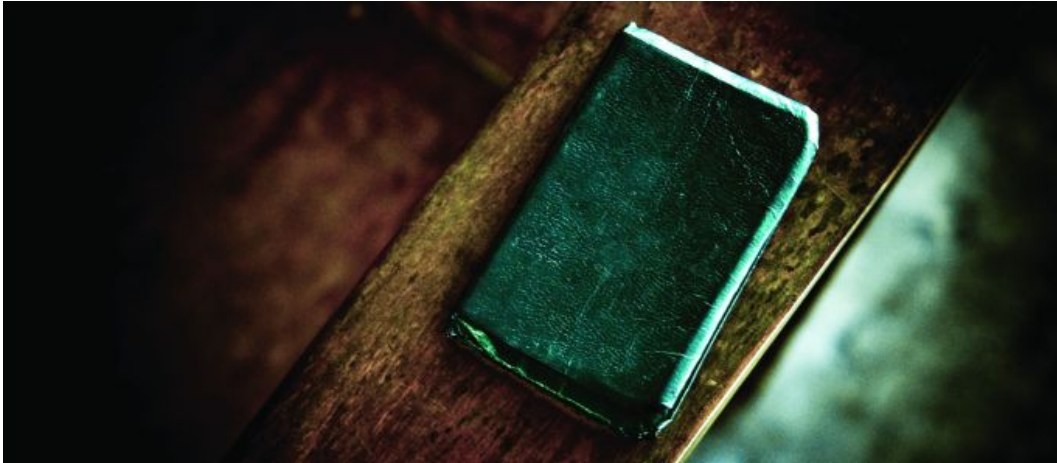
Miracles

1. If God exists then we must admit that miracles are possible. In fact if there is just a *possibility* that God exists, then we must admit that miracles are possible.
2. Most people who don't believe that miracles are possible have that opinion because of an unreasonable anti-supernatural bias. This is common in our culture and is a consequence of Enlightenment thinking from the 1700-1800s, in which an emphasis was placed on Naturalism—that there is no supernatural. The Enlightenment ushered in an era of skepticism, so that many historians and other truth seekers tended to limit investigation of historical events to natural causes only, whether the data fit naturalistic explanations or not.
3. The most influential argument against miracles probably came from David Hume. He claimed that the uniform experience of the overwhelming majority of people in human history is that they have never witnessed a miracle. According to Hume, this uniform experience amounts to proof that miracles do not happen.
4. But Craig S. Keener, New Testament Scholar, says otherwise in his two volume work *Miracles, The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* published in 2011. According to Keener, Hume is wrong because “hundreds of millions of people alive on the earth today claim to have experienced miracles.” Keener then argues that supernatural explanations should be welcome on the scholarly table. In other words, the widespread acceptance of anti-supernatural bias resulting from Enlightenment thinking has been a mistake.
5. When objectively investigating miracle claims, the methodology would be:
 - Identify the facts surrounding the event.
 - Develop hypotheses as to what could have happened (possible explanations.)
 - Evaluate how the known facts fit the hypotheses.
 - If all of the known facts do not fit a hypothesis, then the hypothesis should be rejected.

How does the Bible teach 6,000 years?

by **Lita Cosner**

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The Bible's history gives us the answer to the age of the earth

Many people write in and ask, "How do we know that the earth is 6,000 years old from the Bible?" Given that the chronogenealogies—genealogies where the age of the father at the time of the son's birth is given in an unbroken chain—end shortly after Noah, how do we get from ~1600 AM (*anno mundi* = 'year of the world') to today, which we would argue is about 6000 AM?

How precisely can we know the earth's age?

The precision by which we can know the timing of historical events or ages of things is constrained by the precision of the data we're given. The timing we're given in the chronogenealogies is accurate to within one year of the event. By this, I mean we can know that Adam was 130 years old when he fathered Seth, but we don't know if he was 130 and 3 months, or just shy of 131, for example. This is true for all the ages. So when you add up the chronogenealogies, we know that the Flood happened in 1656, plus up to less than 10 years, because we have 10 numbers that have less than a year of uncertainty. If all of the numbers were recorded just shy of the next birthday (for instance, Adam was 130 and 11 months when he fathered Seth, Seth was 105 and 11 months when he fathered Enosh, and so on), the Flood could have been as late as 1665 AM. But clearly this sort of small-scale uncertainty won't give any comfort to people who want to add thousands of years to human history.

The precision by which we can know the timing of historical events or ages of things is constrained by the precision of the data we're given.

The Flood to the Patriarchs

There is an unbroken chronogenealogy from Shem to Abraham in Genesis 11, and we're given the information elsewhere in Genesis¹ to extend the chronology until the relocation of Israel to Egypt when Jacob was 130 years old. Going by these numbers, Jacob went to Egypt in 642 + less than 12 years after the Flood, or 2298 + less than 22 years AM. The chronogenealogy ends here, with nearly 2,000 years to go until Christ.² How do we extend the timeline?

The Patriarchs to the Exodus

[Exodus 12:40](#) says that Israel was in Egypt for 430 years. This harmonizes well with [Genesis 15:13](#) where God tells Abram that his descendants will be enslaved and mistreated for 400 years (enslavement did not happen on their arrival in Egypt but some time after Joseph died, when their number became threatening). So the Exodus happened in 2728 + less than 23 years AM.

The Exodus to the Kings

We know that Israel wandered in the desert for 40 years, meaning that they entered the Promised Land in 2768 + less than 24 years AM. But here the chronology becomes a bit hazier for a while. This is because we don't know *exactly* how long the conquest took, or exactly how long it was before the judges started ruling Israel. We're told how long each judge ruled, and how long each period of peace lasted, but some of these clearly overlap, and some judges clearly only ruled part of Israel, while another judge was ruling another part.

It's clear that from the very first verse of Genesis, the Bible is concerned with giving a factual account of how God has interacted with the earth.

But we have a clear statement in 1 Kings that allows us to continue a reliable chronology. [1 Kings 6:1](#) says "In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the Lord."

So if we subtract 124 years (40 each for the wandering in the desert, Saul's reign, and David's reign, and 4 for the partial reign of Solomon), we get a period of about 356 years for the judges, which fits well with the numbers in Judges if we assume a few overlaps. So Solomon began to build the Temple in 3208 + less than 23 years AM. Notice that even though we're thousands of years into history at this point, the uncertainty about the dates is less than 25 years!

The Kings to the Exile

If we go by the reigns of the kings of Judah, without assuming any co-regencies, from the Temple to the Exile of Judah would have been 429.5 years + less than 21 years. But we know that there *were* co-regencies in Judah, partly by comparing the kings of Judah to the kings of Israel.³ If we do that, we know that from the Temple to the Exile of Judah is actually around 345 years, at around 3553 AM. At this point, it's possible to say what the date would be in our terms—and when one adjusts for the differences in calendrical systems, the vast majority consensus is 586 BC. This would mean that 1 AD would be around 4150 AM, plus or minus less than 50 years, and today we would be around 6150 AM, plus or minus less than 50 years.

The Bible is history!

It's clear that from the very first verse of Genesis, the Bible is concerned with giving a factual account of how God has interacted with the earth. This means that it must give *historically accurate* details, as well as being theologically accurate. In fact, what we believe about God is based on historical claims, so if the history is inaccurate, then the theology must be as well! One of the ways the biblical authors communicated that they were giving actual history is

What about different dates for creation?

Many people have come up with dates for creation, such as James Ussher (4004 BC), Johannes Kepler (3992 BC), Gerhard Hasel (4178 BC), and Isaac Newton (~4000 BC). Additionally, there are various chronologies competing with each other today (though all with the same ballpark outcome) which would be more precise than this article, but also rely on assumptions that must come from a particular interpretation of the text. It is not the purpose of this article to choose any particular one of these chronologies, but rather to show how the plain interpretation of Scripture gives a straightforward chronology that leads us to believe the world is around 6,000 years old, regardless of which of these other chronological frameworks one uses.

by recording lifespans, or measuring the amount of time between certain events.

We can be confident that God's Word is accurate in its historical details as well as in what it tells us about theology.

Father/Event 1	Son/Event 2	Age/Length of time	Running total	Reference
Adam	Seth	130	130	Genesis 5
Seth	Enosh	105	235	Genesis 5
Enosh	Kenan	90	325	Genesis 5
Kenan	Mahalel	70	395	Genesis 5
Mahalel	Jared	65	460	Genesis 5
Jared	Enoch	162	622	Genesis 5
Enoch	Methuselah	65	687	Genesis 5
Methuselah	Lamech	187	874	Genesis 5
Lamech	Noah	182	1056	Genesis 5
Noah	Flood	600	1656	Genesis 7:11
Flood	Arphaxad	2	1658	Genesis 11
Arphaxad	Shelah	35	1693	Genesis 11
Shelah	Eber	30	1723	Genesis 11
Eber	Peleg	34	1757	Genesis 11
Peleg	Reu	30	1787	Genesis 11
Reu	Serug	32	1819	Genesis 11
Serug	Nahor	30	1849	Genesis 11
Nahor	Terah	29	1878	Genesis 11
Terah	Abram	130	2008	Genesis 11
Abraham	Isaac	100	2108	Genesis 21:5
Isaac	Jacob	60	2168	Genesis 25:26
Jacob	Egypt	130	2298	Genesis 47:9
Jacob in Egypt	Exodus	430	2728	Exodus 12:40
Exodus	Temple begun	480	3208	1 Kings 6:1
Temple	Exile	345	3553	

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References and notes

1. Genesis 5 goes from Adam to Noah and his sons; [Genesis 11:10ff](#) goes from Shem to Abram; [Genesis 21:5](#) states that Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born; [Genesis 25:26](#) states that Isaac was 60 when Jacob and Esau were born, and [Genesis 47:9](#) says that Jacob was 130 when he went to Egypt. [Return to text.](#)
2. Some argue for gaps in the Genesis 5 and 11 genealogies. For the reasons to take them as unbroken genealogies, see Sarfati, J. [Biblical chronogenealogies](#), *J. Creation* **17**(3):14–18, December 2003, [creation.com/chronogenealogies](#). [Return to text.](#)
3. For more detail about the challenges of interpreting the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah, see Kaiser W., *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars* (Broadville & Holman: Nashville, TN, 1998), p. 292–300. [Return to text.](#)

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Readers' comments

Katalin P., Australia, 9 December 2012

I like Creation and most of the articles, and I also have trouble to age the Planet Earth, I think it is 6000