

# **Critical Thinking About Creation, Evolution And the Age of the Earth**

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## **Introduction**

### **You Probably Have Brainwashers Disease**

Think back to the worst teachers you had in school. They stand out in a negative way for one or more of the following reasons. First, they didn't know the subject so they couldn't communicate what they didn't know since it wasn't in their brain in the first place. Or, second, they knew the subject but they couldn't communicate effectively so what they taught fell onto the floor making a pile that just grew larger as the semester dragged on, every pearl of wisdom falling short of reaching your brain located only a few feet away. Just in case you might be wondering about that one teacher with the distracting habit of "jingling" coins in his pocket as he lectured - we will classify him in this group with poor communicators. Or, maybe, he knew the subject and even delivered it to your brain, but he gave the impression that he didn't care about your success, so you never opened the door to your brain when the mailman of knowledge came knocking. Perhaps this knowledge could have changed your life but you refused to let it in. For over 25 years hundreds of my students have told me they regret not having taken my classes earlier. For the first time since their formal education began they realize science is not boring – in fact it can be exciting and "had they known they would have majored in science or teaching". Any effective teacher has this amazing potential to change the direction of life of another human being!

The first and second problems of poor teaching we just mentioned can easily be remedied when a teacher decides to fill his mind with knowledge of the subject matter he teaches and decides to practice new and more effective communication skills. But a necessary prerequisite for any positive change is that they first of all **care** about becoming a better teacher or they won't decide to change. The effort we put forth in improving any area in our life is very much affected by how much we care about improving. If we don't care we usually don't put forth much effort, and change does not occur. It's part of human nature. I take special notice when any of my students demonstrate that they care about another student. For anyone to care about another person enough to put their own interests below the interest of another is a rare quality. These are the students whom I encourage to become teachers because they already possess the one essential ingredient that no university can effectively teach them and, yet, is the most essential ingredient in the recipe that all good teachers are made from – that they care about people. A

good teacher knows the subject and is able to deliver the package of knowledge to the door of your brain in such a way that **you open the door for the mailman, eager to find out what he brought you.** The people in your life whom you believe care about you have earned the privilege of entering your mind and affecting your life. The statement that **“no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care”** is old but true. Perhaps as old and as true as the Bible verse that hangs on the door to my office where I teach (Hebrews 10:6-7). My primary goal is to change your life by changing the way you think. I cannot affect your life if you won't let me in.

I care about what you believe because, like many of my students, you may have the same “disease” that they have. Like a computer virus, people get infected without their knowledge, and their thinking process becomes altered. I call it “brainwasher’s disease”. I have noticed that when people are asked to state what they believe, they cannot make a defense as to why their belief is any better than other beliefs. After thinking about this for over a decade, I am convinced that the reason why they cannot defend their position is because their position was produced by brainwashing, not critical thought. In other words, they didn’t make up their own mind to believe this or that; they have borrowed beliefs from someone else who may have borrowed them from someone else! Everyone can fall victim to this “disease” so my concern is for everyone, regardless of religious preference. Most of my students have had this disease all their lives, and it is very contagious. Have you been infected? Take this simple test to find out. How many years old do you think the earth is? Now that you have a number in mind, do you know the name of the method used to get that number? Do you know the assumptions involved with the method? Do you know why you accept those assumptions over the assumptions of the other 60 or more other methods of measuring the age of the earth? I have asked these questions of my students for over 10 years now and have found that just about everyone can’t provide answers on the first day of class. Were you able to answer these questions? If not, welcome to the infirmary! What you will learn in this study will help put you on the road to recovery.

## **Brainwashing And Teaching Are Two Different Professions**

Simply stated, brainwashing is learning only “what to think” (the conclusions or belief you think is true) and teaching is learning “how to think” (the process you used to arrive at that belief) so that the conclusions are the result of your own reasoning. A more general question to test to see if you have been brainwashed is to ask “can I make a defense for my position?” If the only defense for my position is something like “my pastor told me” or “it’s in my textbook” or “that’s what I saw on television”, then you have been brainwashed. Please don’t misunderstand me. **Brainwashing does not always involve false conclusions; it does always involve a lack of critical thinking** so you don’t own the position. You have just borrowed it from someone or someplace. On the other hand, if you can defend your

position by stating the method used, assumptions with the method and why you choose to believe those assumptions, you own the position – the mark of an educated person. For 15 years I brainwashed visitors who came to Yosemite National Park, Griffith Park Observatory, and thousands of students at Santa Monica and Antelope Valley Colleges. For example, I used to ask my geology students to tell me why the earth is 4.6 billion years old. In other words, I put them into a box where they had to defend a position that they could not reject by presenting this method of dating the earth as the only valid way to do so; no other method was presented for their consideration. Because of how I presented the material, I implied that no other method of dating the earth existed or mattered. How can anyone decide what to believe without choices? In this study we will critically think through the case for creation and the case for evolution, as well as different dating methods so that when we are finished, you can make an informed decision that is your own. Notice that I do not expect you to reach the same conclusions as I have, unless you can make your own defense for the same conclusions. But everyone is not the same. One person will have a different bias than another, or a different ability to understand the same information, so we had best address those differences so they are less likely to sneak up on us. Biases have a devious way of working in the background of our thinking – like the part of our nervous system that is automatic. How often do think about digestion, or heart rate? As we will see, believers and unbelievers will approach the topic of creation with very different biases and abilities to understand.

## Does It Matter If You Are A Believer?

The answer is most definitely yes, but first of all lets define some terms. A believer is someone whom God the Father and God the Holy Spirit have a personal relationship with. And the **only** way anyone can have this relationship is by knowing the right person – Jesus - not doing the right things. When it comes to where you will spend eternity, it won't be what you know but **whom** you know that counts. Only through the blood of Christ – His sacrifice on the Cross – has the Father's wrath been satisfied. Consider these verses:

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."*<sup>1</sup>

*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.*

*"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And*

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<sup>1</sup> John 14:6, NASÖ5. Quotes from the Bible will be blue, except those of Christ which will be red.

***then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'*"<sup>2</sup>**

Note that many will be fooled into thinking that doing the right things will get them into heaven. Jesus will set them straight, but unfortunately for them, it will be too late to change their destiny. Be careful to distinguish the difference between just having an intellectual knowledge of who Jesus is – it is a personal, life changing knowledge, a relationship with **Him** that they never had. The good works happen after the relationship with Him has begun.

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, **it is the gift of God; not as a result of works**, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**"<sup>3</sup>*

An unbeliever is someone who does not have this relationship with God. I was once an unbeliever but now I am a believer. Please allow me to illustrate this change with an analogy.

Let's return to the idea of knowledge being delivered as a package to the door of your mind. When the postman arrives, you have the choice of opening the door and taking the package or not. Consider the previous verses in red. These are the words of Jesus. The package delivered to your door is the knowledge of what those verses say. And He considers this package so important that He delivers it Himself – He is the postman. He knows that you know that He is at the door. If you decide not to open the door, He patiently waits outside - Jesus will not break down the door and force you to accept the package. The package is a gift called the Gospel (which means Good News) and it is totally free – you don't even pay for postage. Imagine someone coming to your door with the deed to your house marked "mortgage paid in full" and they gave it to you as a gift, not expecting to be paid back for paying-off your mortgage. Wouldn't you be foolish to reject this gift? Perhaps a better example would be the President of the United States coming to personally deliver your presidential pardon. He is so eager to commute your death sentence that he delivers the paperwork himself! When you die (that's the terminal disease we all have) your soul will leave your body and spend eternity in hell or in heaven. If you open the door and accept the pardon, your soul will be with God in heaven for eternity – a much better place than Hell. Do you think that the gravity of the situation of receiving a presidential pardon would elicit a response of "thanks, I will think about it"? I don't think so! Jesus wants you to acknowledge with heartfelt conviction that you are a sinner and cannot save yourself from the wrath of God the Father, who is not only loving but also just, and therefore must punish sin. He wants you to know that His Son Jesus paid that debt in your place when He was crucified. Once you understand this, the response to your pardon will be

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<sup>2</sup> Matt. 7:21-23, NAS<sup>95</sup>, emphasis mine

<sup>3</sup> Eph. 2:8-10, NAS<sup>95</sup>, emphasis mine

more like this: “Wow, I can be released from prison today and all of my crimes will be completely erased!” Be aware that God cannot be fooled because He knows the intentions of your heart. Out of gratitude you would thank Him and call Him Savior and Lord. A president of Princeton once said

*“As a young man I accepted Christ and the gift of eternal life. All the rest of my life has been simply a P.S. to that day, saying, ‘Thank you, Lord, for what you gave to me then.’”*

I was only about seven years old when my Sunday school teacher - Mrs. Candow - gave me a postcard size painting of Jesus showing Him knocking on the door to a house. It has hung in the various buildings that I have called “home” for the past 43 years. And for the first 34 years I failed to notice a curious thing about it; the door doesn’t have a handle for Jesus to use. He won’t come in without consent from the owner; it must be opened from the inside. I kept Jesus outside the door to my life for 34 years. He must be very, very patient to have been standing there for that long. And all during that time, those who walked by my house looking in from the outside saw Jesus there on my doorstep, but they misunderstood why He was there. They probably thought He was there because I was a Christian. After all, they saw me go to church each Sunday, not just on Christmas and Easter. And I was one of those “good little boys” who always got candy from the sweet older ladies in my neighborhood. But although I looked like a Christian on the outside I wasn’t one on the inside, where it counts. I didn’t have a relationship with Jesus at that time. At that time I was one of those who would insist that heaven was something that I deserved because I thought myself good enough. Thank you Jesus for your patience!

I don’t know who delivers your mail, but this I do know: the most important package that you will ever receive at any time in your life is the one being delivered to your door right now by Jesus. It contains a gift that is beyond measure in value and one that you can’t get from anyone else. It is an invitation to get to know the creator of this universe. Notice how this relationship begins:

*“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; **if anyone hears My voice** and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”<sup>4</sup>*

He won’t knock down the door or force you to take it; you must want it and demonstrate that you want it by opening the door. And I am certain of one more thing; if you accept the invitation with eagerness, your life will be forever changed for the better. You will live differently because you will care about people the way Jesus cares about people. This package of knowledge from God, brought to your door by Jesus will definitely change your life if you

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<sup>4</sup> Rev. 3:20, NAS<sup>95</sup>

accept it with eagerness and expectation. A student asked me just last week why the following verse is on my office door:

*“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”<sup>5</sup>*

I placed it there because it states a very important point about Christianity: when you hear Jesus knock and respond to this knock by **coming to him** at the door and **believing that he really does exist** and you invite Him in, God will **reward you because you are earnestly seeking him**. But why should you open the door to someone who has a package that could change your life? After all, do you really want a changed life? Maybe your life is just fine. But consider this. Because God cares about you more than any person possibly can, and demonstrated His love by dying on the cross in your place, isn't it obvious that whatever changes are in the future for your life must be for the better, certainly not for the worse?

But what does becoming a believer have to do with biases and abilities to understand? Believers have one major advantage that unbelievers don't have in understanding the case for creation: they have the Holy Spirit inside of them interpreting and guiding their understanding of what the Bible says. No other group of human beings can comprehend the Holy Scriptures in the way God intended. And since the information about creation, the Flood and the age of the earth are found in the Bible, no other group is better able to understand God's perspective on these subjects. Notice how the Bible describes the different abilities of believers and unbelievers (the natural man) with respect to understanding God's Word:

*“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.**”<sup>6</sup>*

The word “understand” is translated from the Greek word *ginosko* (Strong's 1097) which means to “allow”, “feel”, “be resolved” or “be sure” in addition to “understand” as it was translated here. Notice that the natural man (unbeliever) “cannot understand (allow, feel, resolve, or be sure of) the things of the Spirit” – he doesn't have a choice in the matter. But what if he studies diligently? No, he will only understand when he becomes a believer and the Spirit of Truth lives in him. What does the following sentence convey?

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<sup>5</sup> Hebrews 11:6, NIV

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 2:12-15, NAS<sup>95</sup>, emphasis mine.

I have no idea what this sentence says.

Foolishness! Actually, I typed “I have no idea what this sentence says.” using the Wingdings font. Unless you know Wingdings, you wouldn’t understand. In a similar way, an unbeliever can read the words of the Bible, but he will not get the understanding of that verse that the believer gets through the Spirit. Unbelievers who become believers acquire a whole new understanding of everything – it’s quite remarkable and must be experienced to be believed. **God gives the ability to understand His Word to those who become His children – amazing!** But even though unbelievers will think the verses we will study are foolishness, the unbeliever will be challenged to defend his position, and for that reason alone, this study will be of benefit to him as well. Of course, if the unbeliever, from his heart, confesses his sins to Jesus, asking for forgiveness, and is truly repentant and truly wants to know God, God is faithful to grant his request. This is my hope for every unbeliever. Do it now before your life on this earth is brought to an end, and the ability to choose God is no longer possible. To learn more about this most important step go to [\[link\]](#).

But even though the believer has the ability, through the Spirit, to understand the Bible, the Spirit does not force the believer to think God’s thoughts – the believer always has the freedom to make choices. And sometimes he chooses to believe what the world believes. In a sense, I am putting this believer on trial. Will the evidence in his life convict him of hypocrisy in the first degree? I am an “ex-con”, found guilty 15 years ago of brainwashing thousands of unsuspecting students. And God got my attention and convicted me. For the first 25 years of my life I called myself a Christian but I taught evolution and an old earth as facts – I never even wondered about what God thought.

It is hard for a Christian to believe in creation and a young earth because the popular conclusion, the one taught in schools and in the media, is evolution and an old earth. The Bible clearly teaches that God created this universe out of nothing. He spoke it into existence. The Bible does not teach evolution. And the only way to get the age of the earth from the Bible is by using genealogies, resulting in an age in the thousands of years, not billions. But what about someone who is not a Christian – can he be accused of hypocrisy as well? He cannot, and for a very good reason: he does not have the ability to choose between creation and evolution because creation is spiritually appraised, and he cannot understand spiritual things. He cannot be tried for the crime of hypocrisy anymore than a horse can be tried for standing on 4 feet instead of 2. It is his nature to believe as he does, accepting human wisdom above Godly wisdom. If he were to accept the creation of the universe as stated in the Bible, he would be choosing to take a foolish position. And no one – Christian or not – chooses to be a fool.

Everyone should be able to defend what he or she believes. This is especially true of Christians who, by believing in creation and a young earth, are



considered by many to be “off their rocker” to believe such nonsense. There was a time when I ridiculed those who believed in a literal six-day creation, a world-wide Flood and a 6,000 year old earth and now I am a defender of all three. For 36 years of my life I didn’t take the Bible seriously but for the past 15 years I have been living to glorify Christ, holding the Bible in highest esteem. When Jesus Christ became my Lord and Savior in 1988, my understanding of the past began a radical transformation. This study is a summary of how God has changed my thinking about the past.

I have also noticed that those who believe in evolution have the mindset that their method of thinking about the past is better (after all, it is science) than any method that uses the Bible (after all, it’s faith and foolishness). Until the credibility of their position can be lowered in their minds, they won’t be receptive to any other view. **Anyone who does not believe in creation can begin to think of creation in a more positive light when they begin to see the assumptions with what they believe. And most people don’t think their view has assumptions because they were brainwashed instead of taught! Or, if they know the assumptions, those assumptions are certainly better ones than the assumptions that result from believing the foolishness of the Bible. Since the assumptions with evolutionary thinking are never taught in textbooks, I believe it is the Christian’s responsibility to make them known because no one else has the motivation to do so.** At least once a semester I counsel a student who has the complaint that one of their professors is “pushing evolution in class” and they feel it is wrong for them to learn such heresy. I tell them that there is no better way to learn how the world thinks than to be in such a class. And unless they know how people think, how can they effectively explain the assumptions of evolution and an old earth? This student doesn’t need to believe evolution or that the earth is billions of years old but he does need to understand the reasoning used to conclude such things! Just as Christians study how Satan operates so they can be prepared to defend themselves when he attacks, the same is true when it comes to evolution. Christians need to know the evidence used to support evolution and the assumptions embedded within evolutionary thinking.

You might be thinking something like “the age of the earth is a minor matter, something that Christians can disagree with one another about”. I agree with this point of view. But, does your defense of your position involve the Bible at all? Do you believe in creation or evolution? Is your defense of creation or evolution Biblically based or based on the wisdom of the world? **Is your defense based upon the words of men who weren’t there and don’t know everything, or the words of God who was there and knows everything? If you can’t make a Biblical defense for creation and make a rational case against evolution, then this study will help fuel the energy of your discussion with those who hold the evolutionary view.** Why can I make such a statement? Because for 15 years I taught my students what to think and they sat there, almost asleep, in a state of mental hibernation. Then, through the grace of God, I stopped brainwashing and began teaching. Wow, did that make a difference in the



classroom! Although defending their position is new for most students, they rise to the challenge and come out of hibernation. When I lecture on the assumptions of evolution and dating rocks, and show them articles that contradict what their textbook says, they are “all ears”. Why? No one wants to be “sold a bill of goods”. No one wants to be brainwashed when they realize that they can think for themselves before making a conclusion. Furthermore, when they realize that the conclusion reached by the author of their textbook is only one of several possible conclusions from the same evidence, they get really interested in **thinking**. For a teacher, this is like winning the lottery! Given the choice, most people would rather be given all the evidence so they can make up their own mind of what to believe rather than be forced to make the only conclusion possible from limited evidence that is one sided. From a spiritual perspective, the most exciting thing about this kind of teaching is that, once someone sees that what they thought was fact is really only one conclusion that can be made from the evidence, then they begin to doubt the conclusions that they were brainwashed into believing were true and begin to consider alternate conclusions, such as creation. The desire to know how everything in this universe got here is a subject that everyone deals with sooner or later. Christians should be able to state and defend God’s perspective to the question of origins, seasoning their position with salt, so that the person they talk with is challenged to think biblically. My goal for the Christian in this study is two fold: that he is prepared to defend the biblical case for creation and the age of planet earth with confidence and conviction; and the second is that he be able to expose the assumptions involved with evolution and an old earth.

## **My Testimony**

I was once a person who claimed to be a Christian, but I was only going through the motions. I went to church every Sunday and thought of myself as good enough to please God – even good enough to get into heaven. But through the people God brought into my life, and a divorce, I was shown that being a Christian involved more than I thought. My first encounter with these “unusual people” was back in the 1970’s and early 1980’s when I worked as a seasonal ranger naturalist for the National Park Service at a beautiful place called Glacier Point in Yosemite National Park. Glacier Point is located at the end of a dead-end road, 37 miles by car from the most inhabited portion of the Park called Yosemite Valley. Although the road is rather long, it almost circles back on itself, gaining elevation and ends at the edge of the rim of the Valley 3,200 feet above the floor. Most visitors drive to Glacier Point to see the view – and what a spectacular view it is! Standing at the railing the cars below on the Valley floor can just barely be seen while peaks such as Half Dome and Cloud’s Rest to the east seem almost near enough to touch because of their enormous size, even though they are actually several miles away. The beauty of this place is best seen at sunset when the reds, pinks and yellows of the setting sun are projected on the High Sierran peaks to the east.

## Placing the Geologic and Human History of Yosemite in Perspective

Richard Balogh

Most people will agree that 100 years is a long time. But compared to the time that Yosemite's landscape has been evolving, 100 years represents less than one minute of one human lifetime. Since our lifetime does not span the millions or billions of years necessary for a landscape to evolve, man cannot grasp the relative importance of such large numbers. For example, if you were one billion seconds old, how many years old would you be? Most of the Park visitors asked this question by the author have replied five or ten years. But the real answer is 12 years. Similarly, when the geologic history of Yosemite is explained in terms of actual time, one does not appreciate the relative time spans involved. The following simplified geologic history of Yosemite presents the notion of geologic time in a way that may be easier to understand.

Since everyone is familiar with one year of time, let's condense the geologic history of Yosemite into just one year. If January 1 represents the time of formation of the oldest rock in the Park, then today's date is represented by December 31, just before midnight, and all the events in the formation of the landscape will take place some time in between. Since the oldest rocks in the Park were formed over 500 million years ago, we are condensing about 500 million years into one year and, as a consequence, each day represents more time than usual. In fact, one day represents 1.4 million years, one hour represents 58,000 years, one minute represents 970 years, and one second represents 16 years.

From January 1 to September 21, sediments were being deposited on the floor of a large inland sea that covered what is now the Sierra Nevada. At the end of this period, the layers of deposits accumulated to a thickness of approximately 11 miles. The weight of overlying layers compressed and lithified the sediments into rocks of various types – sandstone, claystone, and limestone, to mention only three. The top layers of this rock were pushed above sea level and folded during a period of five days, September 21 to September 26, and formed the ancient Sierra Nevada Range. Geologists believe this ancient range resembled the Appalachian Range of today in that the rocks were folded into northwest-trending ridges. From September 26 to October 1, all the granitic rock of the Yosemite region cooled and solidified from a hot liquid state while covered with an estimated five miles of rock overburden. The granite slowly melted its way upward owing to its lighter density but never flowed as a liquid on the earth's surface. Only an occasional volcano, composed of a rock related to granite, hinted of the large mass of granite cooling below. Heat lost by the cooling granite changed the older sandstone, claystone, and limestone into quartzite, slate, and marble, respectively. Erosion was dominant from October 1 to November



About 30 minutes before sunset, one of the rangers would begin to give a “sunset talk” to the many visitors waiting for the spectacular alpine glow to begin. My sunset talk was entitled “Placing the Geologic and Human History of Yosemite in Perspective”<sup>7</sup>. I condensed the 500 million-year geologic history of Yosemite into one year of time in an attempt to make the long geologic history more understandable to visitors, most of who have no background in geology. Each day of my imaginary year represents 1.4 million years, one hour represents 58,000 years, one minute represents 970 years and one second represents 16 years of real time in earth history. In my story, the oldest rocks in the Park began forming on January 1 and the glaciers left their marks during the last 17 hours of the year on December 31. The first white man entered the Yosemite area only nine seconds before midnight on December 31. I was particularly proud of this presentation and received many complements over the years. But there were a few visitors who didn’t like it because they argued that I was giving faulty information. These were the “unusual people”.

I remember talking with these people – perhaps only six over a ten-year period – who were convinced that the oldest rocks couldn’t be 500 million years old because, according to the Bible, the earth is only about 6,000 years old. I thought these people were nuts. **They were foolish for not believing what I thought was the truth!** I had a bachelor’s and master’s degree in geology and they were telling me that I was wrong! If I was wrong then all the books written on the geologic history of Yosemite were wrong. What was even more disturbing to me is that if they were right then much of what I learned at UCLA was wrong. Impossible! They were nuts and out of touch with reality. They were not people who simply made a mistake and saw their error – I could not convince them otherwise. A normal person would listen to reason. Like the lady who purchased several post cards from the gift shop, wrote on them, stamped them and put them all in the trash

<sup>7</sup> Yosemite Nature Notes, V.46, No.2, 1977, p.45-46

can. When I pointed out to her that our bear-proof trash cans look like mailboxes, she quickly realized her mistake and asked me to retrieve her mail. She was a normal person who listened to reason. She was not foolish, she accepted my instruction as truthful. But those people who thought the earth was only thousands of years old were foolish because they would not agree that I was right and they were wrong. Perhaps that is why they are so vivid in my memory.

In the early 1980's one of my astronomy students at Antelope Valley College gave me a copy of a four-page publication called "Impact" published by ICR (Institute for Creation Research) in El Cajon, California . It dealt with Joshua 10:12-13, which is an account of the sun and moon stopping in the sky for about a whole day. The student asked me to read it and explain how this could have happened. I reasoned that since the majority of the sun's and moon's apparent motion in the sky each day is due to the earth's rotation (spin on its axis which causes day and night), the earth's rotation would have to stop in order for the sun and moon to remain stationary in the sky. In my mind, this was clearly not possible so the Biblical description must be in error. He asked if I was a Christian and I replied that I was and that I had been attending church since the age of five.

Although I considered myself a Christian all my life, I don't think that God would have agreed with me. Through a painful divorce in the late 1980's, He got my attention. At this lowest point of my life God showed me my need for His Son to be my Lord and Savior. This was the beginning of my new life as a believer. I will never forget how Bill invited me to Valley Bible Church where I heard the gospel (the package that Jesus has for you) for the first time. Bill was also one of my astronomy students and later he and I team-taught astrophotography at Antelope Valley College for several years. I was amazed at the large number of Valley Bible Church members, like Bill, who worked as scientists and engineers in the aerospace industry. Most of the deacons at Valley Bible at that time were NASA engineers! Why was I amazed? Because these guys have a head on their shoulders (have you ever met a dumb rocket scientist?) and yet they believe that the Bible is true! I became involved with several ministries at Valley Bible and later became the advisor of the Christian Club at Antelope Valley College in the late 1980's.

One day a lady called me with a question. She knew that I taught geology and that I was the Christian Club Advisor. She wanted to know if I was a "theistic evolutionist". I was embarrassed to tell her that I had never heard that term before. She then wanted to know how I could believe the Bible and yet teach evolution. Boy, was I humbled! **The word "hypocrite" flashed before my eyes.** I had taught that evolution was true in all my classes for over ten years. But how could I keep teaching evolution if the account of creation in Genesis was the truth? God used that phone call to change the way I think and the way I teach. Could I defend what the Bible says about earth history? In short, did God write in the rocks what He wrote in the Book?

I went out to the local Christian bookstore and purchased my first book (of many) that defends Biblical creation, the Flood and a young earth. I did not read it with the humble attitude of “God, teach me the truth, my mind is open to consider your counsel”. Instead I read it with a critical attitude of “what are the holes in their arguments so that I can have a basis for doubting it”. Sure enough, I marked up almost every page with comments like “this is an assumption” or “how do we know this for sure” or “how can they doubt this fact because I learned in school that it is true”. This book caused more doubt in my mind after I read it than before I read it. But as I read more books, I found some that pointed out some assumptions in the popular isotopic (also referred to as the radiometric) method I learned in school to date rocks – dates in the billions of years. Now here I became very interested because **I never before viewed my college education as having assumptions.** Not only did they point out assumptions but also referenced articles in the scientific literature ( like Nature, Science, Scientific American) where those incorrect assumptions were blamed for bogus dates. **Bogus dates! - No one ever pointed out those articles to me in seven years of college education!** For the first time I began to look at what I learned in school with a different kind of eye – a critically thinking eye. **Looking back at my college education, I can see now that I was brainwashed into thinking something was true because I was only shown evidence in support but never against that topic. In other words, I was taught what to think not how to think.** I was taught that the earth was billions of years old because the currently accepted method dates the oldest earth rock at billions of years old. That is “what to think”. I was never given the opportunity to doubt that age because I was never taught the assumptions and never given the opportunity to search the literature (as well as good common sense) to see if I was willing to accept those assumptions as believable. Since an assumption is something taken to be true but cannot be proven to be true, it is quite possible for someone to believe a particular assumption is true while someone else can disagree and believe it to be false. Furthermore, the age of the earth has not been estimated by only two methods, one giving thousands while the other giving billions of years, but has been estimated by over sixty different methods with results in between those two. And all those methods have assumptions as well!

In 1989, after reading several more creation books, I drove out to a small hill not far from the College to pray. This hill stands alone near the intersection of 90<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue A and has a spectacular view of the Antelope Valley. It is a good place to be alone – there is no one around for miles.





After I prayed I looked down and noticed a United States Geological Survey monument cemented into the bedrock at the top of the hill. Brass monuments such as these are known as “bench marks” and are quite common, especially on mountaintops. However, what caught my eye is that it was broken in half. As I walked back to the car I remember thinking “how appropriate to see a broken bench mark symbolizing how God has broken my old way of thinking about the past”. Eleven years later, in 2000, I drove out to the same hill with my daughter and to my amazement, there is a large white cross right next to the same broken benchmark!



You are probably saying to yourself that the tops of hills are places where both benchmarks and crosses are commonly placed. Was this simply a coincidence or the providence of God? I have no problem accepting either

explanation. But I can't help but smile whenever I think about it. Notice that before my divorce I called myself a Christian but refused to take the Bible seriously as a source of correct information. I attended church for 25 years but was a believer in name only. I was living for me, not for Christ. When I accepted Him as my Lord, the Bible became more important to me than any book because I realized that it is written by the author of the universe so it must be both authoritative and accurate.

## Beware Of Becoming Proud

Some of my Christian colleagues have the opinion that an unbeliever can become a believer by reading such a defense as this one. Their reasoning is that it is the unbeliever's lack of reasonable explanations for creation, the Flood and a young earth is what keeps him from believing in God. Lacking a good defense, they say, is what keeps them from God. I do not hold to their view because, at best, it reduces belief in God to the intellectual level. No amount of human reasoning can do what only God can do. **A broken heart – not a proud intellectual one – is the prerequisite for God to act, and for a man or woman to be “born again”.** If Jesus Christ is not your lord and savior, my prayer for you is that your heart will be broken so that you will be able to understand how awesome the God of the Bible really is and how wretched we humans are in comparison. **Becoming a believer is totally a work of God on our heart.** If what you read doesn't penetrate to your heart, it is merely knowledge that will puff-up and will not be used by God to change your life. With added knowledge, there is always the potential for boasting. Is boasting acceptable behavior?

*“Thus says the LORD, **Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,**” declares the LORD.*”<sup>8</sup>

Boasting about having “all the right answers” is not what God wants. Boasting about who God is and what He has done is appropriate and this will be the major theme of this study. Like the way our skeleton holds up the rest of our body, God's Word is the “backbone” for this defense.

## How Will We Use The Bible?

Do you remember the last time that you used a dictionary? Since dictionaries are not the kind of book that people read just for fun, there was probably a specific reason you used it. Most likely, you were checking the

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<sup>8</sup> Jer. 9:22-23, NASÖ5, emphasis mine.

spelling or meaning of a word. When you found the word you were looking for, did any thoughts of doubt enter your mind? Thoughts like “this word can’t be spelled like that” or “this definition must be wrong” or “Mr. Webster must have made a mistake”. If you are like me, thoughts of doubt on the authority and accuracy of Noah Webster’s most famous book wouldn’t even cross my mind. If the dictionary says so, then it must be so. Are you prepared to argue with the dictionary? Would you agree with me that most people hold the authority of the dictionary in high esteem? Now let’s switch books to the Bible. When you read the Bible, do thoughts of doubt come to mind? Thoughts like “God couldn’t have meant that” or “that doesn’t apply to me” or “they must have translated this verse incorrectly”. Do you hold the authority of the Bible at least as high as the authority of the dictionary? I am not asking “should you” but “do you”? Do you believe that what the Bible says has as much authority and accuracy as what the dictionary says? **Do you accept the truthfulness of the Bible with the same confidence as you accept the truthfulness of the dictionary? If not, then you are placing the words of men above the words of God, and that is a dangerous position for a believer to be in. Who cares? Well, how can you defend anything in the Bible if you don’t have confidence in the Bible’s authority and accuracy?**

We will assume that the entire protestant Bible is true and trustworthy. We will assume that the original Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) manuscripts are the inspired words of God, and that the New American Standard and New International Version are reliable English translations and, therefore, also the words of God. We will not defend this assumption here, but if you question this assumption, go to [\[link\]](#). Although I would think that most believers would hold the Bible in highest esteem, there are several pit falls that we will mention so that we will be aware of them and not fall into them.

The first pit fall is spending energy looking for evidence to support the claim that the Bible is without error and Divinely inspired. Instead of putting this issue away, it continues as an open topic. In other words, instead of having complete confidence in the Bible’s truthfulness and reliability, there is doubt. Some people read creation material with this mindset: the Bible is true **because** it explains some discovery that is impossible to explain otherwise. For example, the discovery of human remains in dinosaur-age rock is consistent with biblical reasoning, since both were made by God on day 6 and buried in the Flood of Noah. But the same evidence is impossible to explain through evolutionary reasoning, since humans evolved about 60 million years after dinosaurs became extinct. Those who support the Bible might say that if this discovery is true, then the Bible must be true. It is as if the Bible needs more than it has to be deemed credible. In other words the Bible is on trial. Although a person on trial may or may not have committed the crime, (both are possibilities), when it comes to the possibility that God’s Word may not be true, that possibility does not exist. In this study we will not put the Bible on trial; I will not try to convince you that the Bible is true. Instead, we assume from the outset that God’s Word is true and trustworthy. **We will**



**try to understand what God said God did but we will not question the accuracy of what He said He did.** The Bible is a trustworthy tool for understanding the past. Imagine an auto mechanic who doesn't have confidence in the tools he is using to fix a car. How can he concentrate on fixing the car when his mind is preoccupied with the inadequacy of his tools?

The second pitfall is not interpreting Scripture properly. We will use this very straightforward and simple rule:

If the plain sense makes good sense seek no other sense.

### **NOT**

If the plain sense disagrees with my opinion then I will seek a different sense, one that I am comfortable with.

This second pitfall is more common for individuals who already have an opinion to defend. But since God's ways are above our ways, we need to abandon our understanding and learn God's understanding. Consider this analogy. If a man living in the past, before 1890, were to hear of a bomb that explodes with the force of 100,000,000 tons of dynamite but weighs only a few pounds, he would think that such a bomb is fiction – nonsense! But today we know that such bombs are very real. The discovery of radioactivity in the 1890's made such a bomb possible. **If God is the source of all knowledge, doesn't it make good sense to listen to what He has to say instead of making His words sound like our words, and making His thoughts look like our thoughts?**

## **We Are Following In The Footsteps Of Paul**

If you were to write down everything you know about earth history your essay would be a mixture of natural information and Biblical information because everybody learns about history from both sources. Even in a home where the Bible is perhaps opened once a year, the first verse in the Bible – “[In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.](#)” – is a phrase known by almost everyone. When you finish your essay, it would be interesting to look it over and categorize information that is contrary to what Scripture teaches from that which is consistent with what Scripture teaches. It might be quite a shock to you as a believer to discover that you have accepted human knowledge more confidently than God's knowledge when piecing together the puzzle of the past. After all, we are bombarded daily with human reasoning by what we see on television and what we read. Particularly in public schools, human wisdom is presented as superior to God's wisdom, and students are directed to memorize and believe it or else not graduate! I have known students who were ridiculed for bringing a Bible to school – my own son being one of them! Notice what Paul wrote to the

believers at Colasse when they were being led away from God by human reasoning.

*“For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument.** For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ. Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. **See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.** For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;”*<sup>9</sup>

And also to the Corinthians, Paul wrote

*“**We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**”*<sup>10</sup>

The persuasive arguments, human philosophy, empty deception that Paul warned believers about in his day were different ones than we will deal with. But ours, like Paul’s, are contrary to what Scripture teaches. We will be defending a literal six-day long ex nihilo (out of nothing) creation of the earth by God **against** the prevailing theory of evolution. We will be defending the global flood of Noah caused by God, lasting about one year, **against** the prevailing worldview of uniformitarianism. And we will be defending an age for the universe that is about 6,000 years **against** the prevailing worldview of 15 to 17 billion years. In all three, the prevailing worldview is dramatically different from Scripture and does not give credit to God for what God said He did in the Bible. We will also deal with the arguments that interpret Scripture in such a contorted way that those who hold to such interpretations believe that there is no difference between what Scripture says and those world views. In other words, they don’t see any problems. Evolution, uniformitarianism and an old earth are man’s conclusions, not God’s conclusions. And, sadly, many believers embrace these worldviews.

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<sup>9</sup> Col. 2:1-10, NAS<sup>95</sup>, emphasis mine

<sup>10</sup> 2 Cor. 10:5, NIV