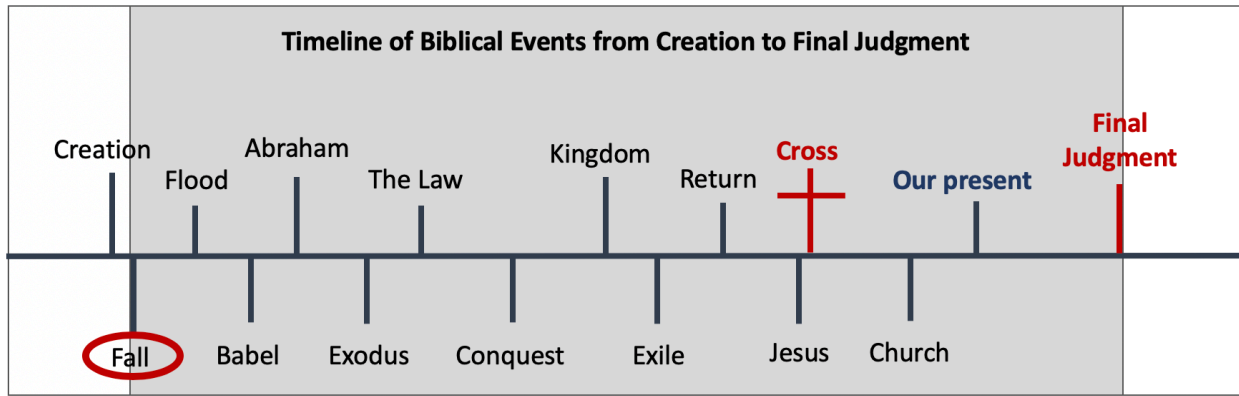


Lesson 4: Three Responses to the Pagan Worldview

Previously...



We've learnt that the pagan worldview was started by Satan in the garden of Eden. He proposed three key concepts that form this worldview: the continuity of being, impersonal fate and chance, and self as the ultimate authority. This pagan worldview has since grown and influenced many people around the world. It has taken on new forms and names but the core concepts remain the same.

Pagan Worldview

1. Continuity of Being (A scale or continuum)
 gods ————— man ————— nature
2. Impersonal Fate and Chance
3. Ultimate Authority: Self

Our Response to the Pagan Worldview

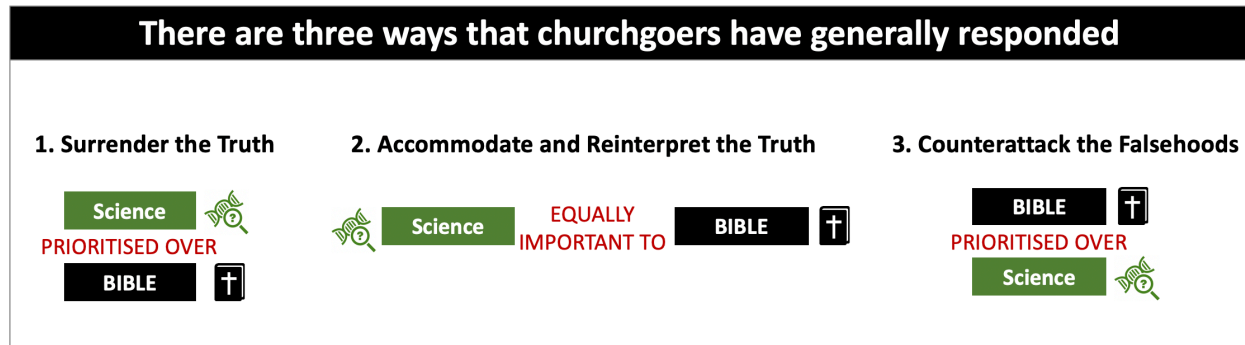
When we read the Bible, we learn that God created the world out of nothing. It was perfect at the time of creation. When man rebelled, sin, evil and death came into the world.

People who do not believe in God or the Bible have formed their own beliefs about how the world came about and why the world today is so full of evil. We can find these beliefs in many books, newspapers, magazines, TV, movies and online. In schools, many teachers and professors also teach these non-biblical beliefs. This pagan worldview comes with labels, like the big bang and evolution.

These two worldviews are opposed to each other.



How do churchgoers settle these two different worldviews in their minds? Which should they believe? Can these two different belief systems be reconciled?




For each of these, we will:

- i. define what they mean
- ii. give examples of what they look like and
- iii. apply the biblical perspective to these views.

We will go through each of these in turn.

1. Surrender the Truth



Some people choose to move away from what the Bible teaches and instead reinvent Christianity to fit the philosophies and thinking of the times.

How did this start? In the 1700s and 1800s, a popular philosophy or way of thinking was that people should understand the world only from natural elements and forces and the laws of science. Anything supernatural or spiritual should be rejected.

In fact, scientists who based their thinking on the Bible were spurned and ridiculed by those who rejected the Bible's account of creation and the global flood. These unbelieving scientists blocked believing scientists from publishing Bible-based explanations of geology and other sciences.

In this way, explanations based on natural forces alone became widespread. This naturalistic thinking that excluded God's supernatural acts in Genesis were accepted by many in the church.

This meant churchgoers started applying naturalistic thinking to everything, including the Bible.

As a result, they started to speculate freely about things the Bible talks about and decide for themselves what they want to accept or reject. Here are some examples of such false thinking in today's world:

- They reject the supernatural way that God created the universe as described in Genesis.

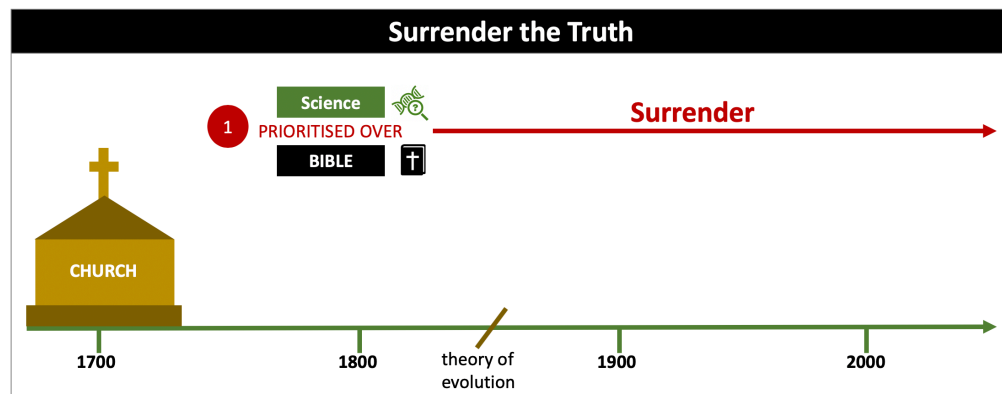


Understand the world only through:

- (i) Science
- (ii) Natural elements and forces

- They do not believe that Moses wrote the book of Genesis even though Jesus Himself said that Moses did (Matthew 19:8; John 5:46–47; John 7:19).
- They claim that the account of Creation and the Fall are not real, but they are moral stories, much like fables.
- They believe that Adam and Eve were not real people, that the garden of Eden was not real and the serpent tempting the first two humans was not real.
- Their stand is that many stories in the Old Testament are not history. Rather, these myths about origins help explain the Bible's view of how this world came about, much like Greek mythology representing the Greek view of the world's origins. There is spiritual truth in these accounts but not necessarily historical fact nor is the Bible describing actual physical reality in these accounts.
- They do not believe that hell is real. They don't believe that man is sinful and will be eternally separated from God.

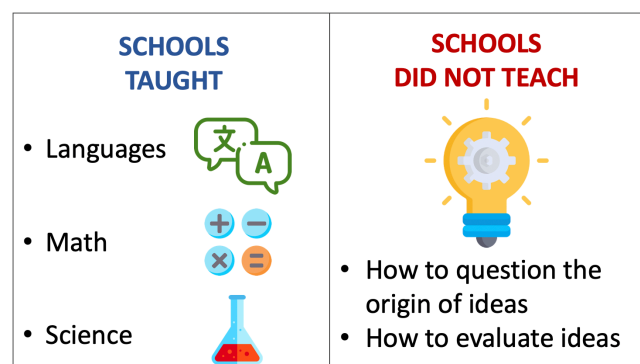
This naturalistic philosophy influenced many churchgoers in the 1700s and 1800s so they ended up believing whatever they wanted instead of what the Bible actually taught. Those who disagreed with such thinking ended up being ridiculed and ignored. Many became discouraged and stopped trying to state their beliefs on these matters. As a result, the idea and practice that Christianity could be reinvented prepared the church to accept other different views that the Bible does not talk about.



When Charles Darwin proposed the theory of evolution in the mid-1800s, many in church readily accepted it while **giving up on traditionally understood biblical truths**. They gave up on what the New Testament believers, apostles and early church believed. In fact, it was the churchgoers in those days that made Darwin's theory even more popular, not the unbelievers!

What happened? Why did people in the church so readily accept teachings that were not from the Bible?



One reason is because they did not know how to question the origins of the ideas.



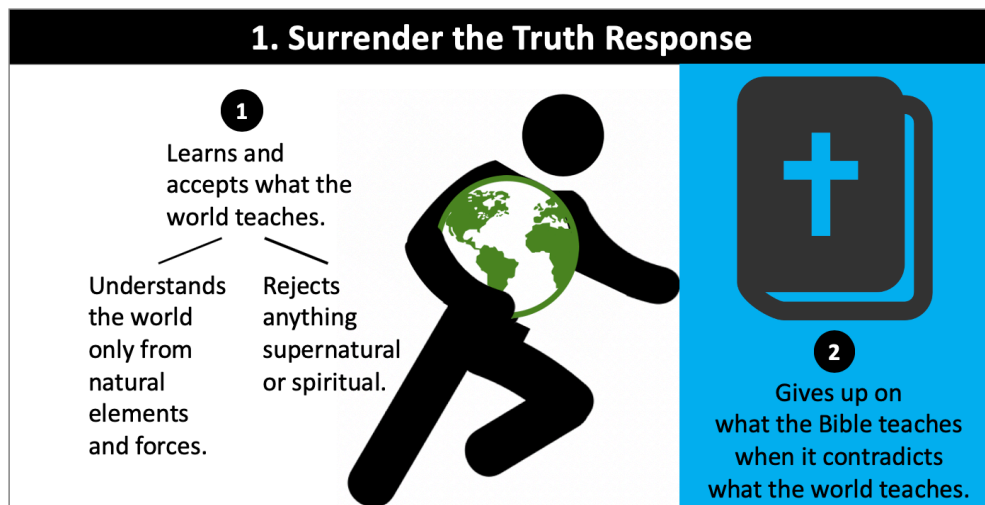
Schools taught things like math and science, but not the philosophy of how to think about truth or the sources of truth. The general population of churchgoers did not know how to critically examine, question and evaluate new ideas. And they just accepted them.

In the case of evolution versus Genesis, they are totally incompatible. These churchgoers chose to surrender and give up the truth and to believe evolution over the Bible.

This next table summarises what they chose to believe:

 Evolution	 Genesis
Starts with gas .	Starts with God .
Sun and stars formed before life started on earth.	Sun and stars formed after life started on earth.
Life evolved from the sea .	Life created on land .
Birds evolved with mammals after fishes are formed.	Birds created with fishes before mammals.
Man evolved from mammals.	Man created from the earth; woman from man.
Rain occurred millions of years before man.	Rain doesn't occur until after man is created.
Evolutionary processes continue today.	Creation is complete; processes turned off .
Life differs in degrees : cats, rocks, people are ultimately the same thing, just protons and electrons arranged differently.	There are fundamental differences in kind. Creatures reproduce after their kind.
Death, sorrow, tears, pain are normal .	God created everything good. Death, sorrow, tears, pain came after the Fall. They are abnormal .
Evolution uses death to bring life .	The Bible teaches that life descended into death .

These churchgoers had absorbed pagan ideas into their way of thinking. They had given up their biblical worldview and surrendered to the unbiblical ideas of their time and thus gave up Christianity in their minds. Such people abandoned God's truth.



2. Accommodate and Reinterpret the Truth



Science

EQUALLY
IMPORTANT TO

BIBLE

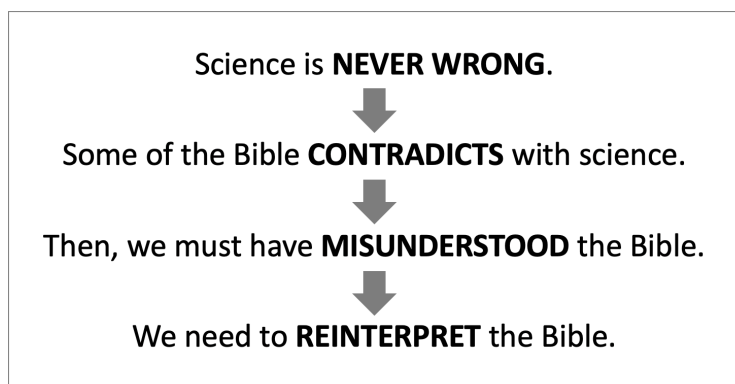


Other believers, out of loyalty to the God of the Bible, are not willing to surrender completely to the pagan worldview. They believe that God does reveal Himself both through Scripture and nature, and so they feel that Genesis and evolutionary “science” fit together well. They believe the Bible is not wrong. However, they also believe science is never wrong. So what happens when science says one thing and the Bible says another?

2. Accommodate and Reinterpret the Truth Response

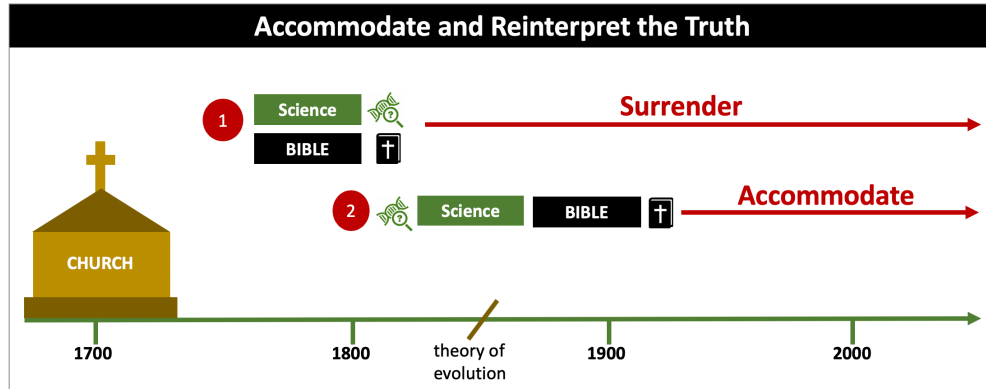


This is when they try to twist the Bible to fit in, or accommodate, the “truth” of science. They do it by reinterpreting the Bible.



In order to make the Bible’s truths fit into such science, they reinterpret the meaning of words or facts in the Bible so that it blends harmoniously with so-called scientific “fact”. This means **they change the traditional interpretation of Genesis**. They move away from how believers since the time of the early church would have understood it.

The result is that the clear words of Scripture have become very muddled. This approach was practised by churchgoers in the 1800s and is still very popular today.

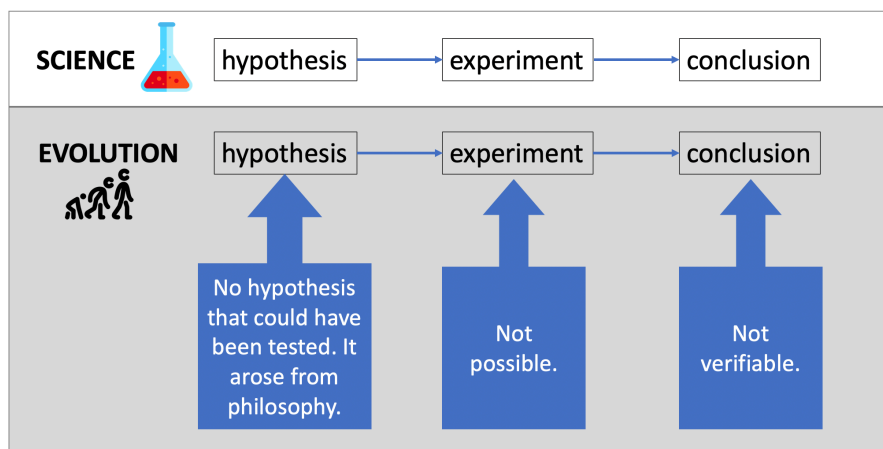


The problem is that this “modern science” has been uncritically accepted. There is no consideration of the possibility that the science may be faulty, data may have been interpreted wrongly or that scientists were missing data or may have used flawed thinking, theories or presuppositions (the underlying base of assumptions).

Instead of looking carefully at the “science” that is being presented or questioning the assumptions or methods used, they wholeheartedly accept that science, and not the Bible, is the final authority on all matters. Science can explain everything and if science cannot, then it cannot be true. This way of thinking is called scientism.

Such thinking is dangerous because the “facts” of science change as scientists learn more about the world. For example, at one point in history, people thought a grain of sand was the smallest particle in the universe. Later, scientists were so certain that the proton was the smallest particle, until other scientists discovered that quarks were even smaller. Now sincere scientists dare not even make absolute claims. Should science then be comparable to the God of the Bible? Are both never wrong?

When theories such as evolution are lumped into “modern science”, the problems get even more complicated. Evolution was a theory that arose from philosophy, not real science. There was no hypothesis that could have been tested, no experiments that could have been repeated and no conclusions that could have been verified.



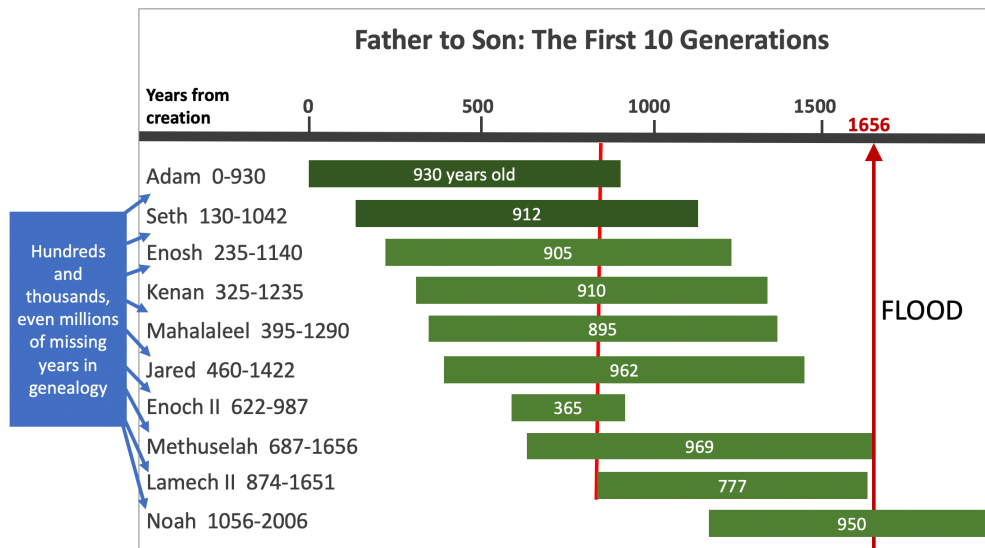
What does accommodation and reinterpretation look like? How do they force fit science and the Bible? In the case of Genesis and evolution, one key issue is the problem of time.

If we carefully follow the Bible’s chronology or timing of historical events, we can calculate the age of the earth to be around 6,000 years. There are approximately 2,000 years from Adam to Abraham, 2,000 years from Abraham to Christ, and 2,000 years from Christ to today.

But evolution needs millions and millions of years. So enough time must be added to Scripture to let evolution happen. Let’s see three examples of how this is done.

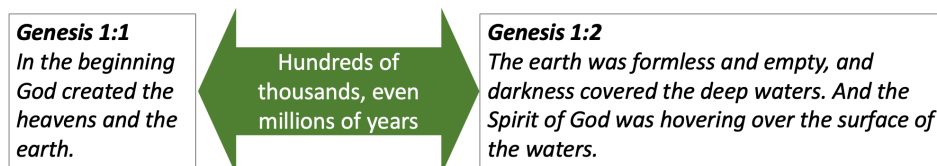
Example 1: Gaps in biblical genealogy of Adam

Accommodationists claim that there are missing years or gaps in the genealogy of Adam. In fact, these gaps may account for hundreds and thousands of years, maybe even millions.



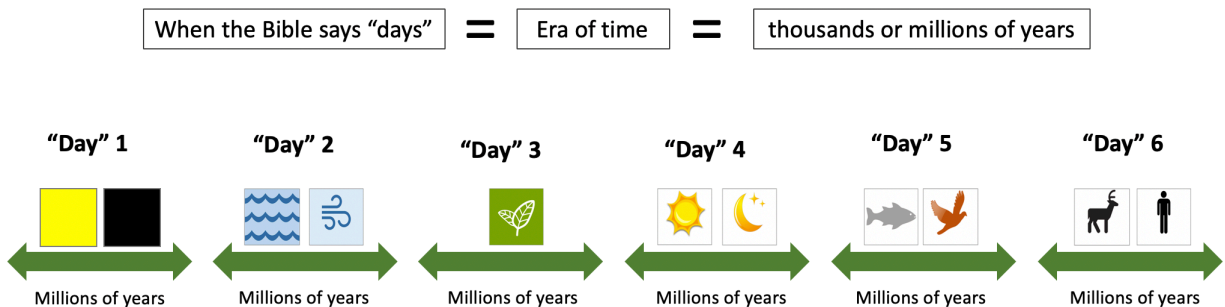
Example 2: Gap theory

They say that there is a large gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. This gap of time could be hundreds of thousands and even millions of years.



Example 3: Reinterpreting the word “days”

In the Creation account, the Bible says that the world was created in six days. The theory of evolution says it took millions upon millions of years to arrive at the world we know today. To mash these two different ideas together, accommodationists changed the meaning of the word “day” to mean an era of time. It could mean a thousand years, it could mean millions of years. If six days means six million years or six sets of millions upon millions of years, then it’s possible to say that the Creation account is true and that evolution is true! All they needed was a definition change to the word “day”.



Who is right?

Today, there are many books and resources arguing for and supporting the “accommodation” and “surrender the truth” approaches written by popular authors with big names and reputations. Are they right? What are we to believe? What does the Bible itself say?

Problems with the “Surrender” and “Accommodate” Models

This lesson is not a deep dive into comparing what the Bible says with what people who “surrender the truth” or “accommodate and reinterpret the truth” believe. However, it would be helpful to look at some truths we find in God’s Word. Here are six incompatibility issues between the Bible’s teaching and these views to think about:

A. The problem of death before the Fall.

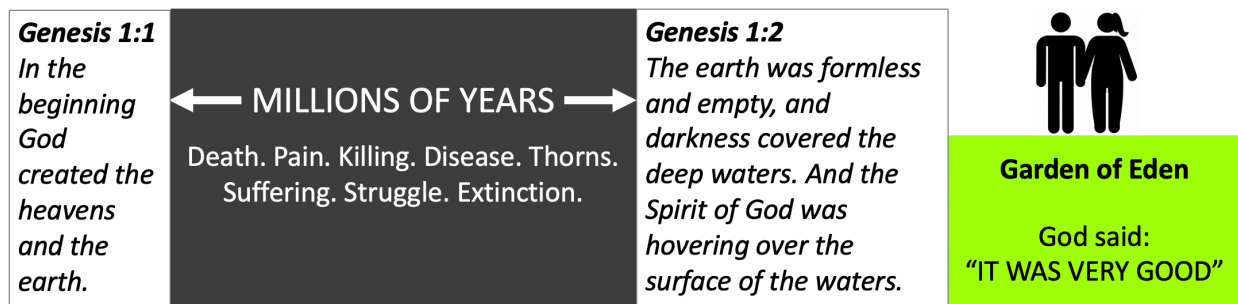
Some people who want to blend the theory of evolution with the Creation account try to work in millions of years into Genesis 1. If we do that, this means that before the Fall event in the garden of Eden, there would have to be death in all those millions of years of evolution. In other words, such a theory would be stating that there was death in God’s perfect creation before the Fall.

How then could God claim that creation was “very good” if plants, animals and people were dying long before sin and evil entered the world?

Genesis 1:31

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

We can hardly call God wise or even sane if He thought that a world filled with death, pain and suffering could be called “very good”!



No, the Bible states that death was a consequence of Adam and Eve’s rebellion against God.

Genesis 3:17–19

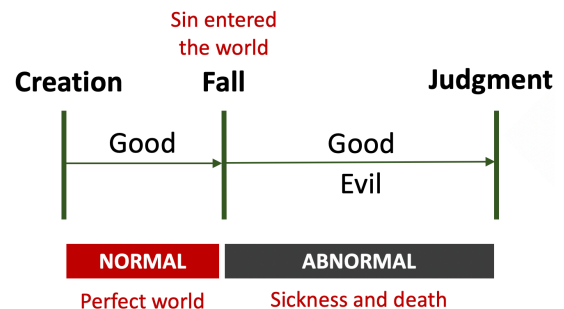
¹⁷ And to the man he said,
 “Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.
¹⁸ It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.
¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.”

God said since Adam listened to both the devil and his wife, Eve, death came into the world as a result of Adam’s rebellion and sin.

Romans 5:12

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

Death is abnormal, just as evil is abnormal and not part of God’s plan for a perfect world. The millions of years in Creation theory is not compatible with what the Bible says happened at the beginning.



B. The Old Testament took the Creation account literally.

We'll go a little deeper into this issue of putting millions of years in the Creation account. Some believers take a verse like 2 Peter 3:8 to state that the word "day" in the Creation account is probably not a literal day.

2 Peter 3:8

But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day.

For these accommodationists, they take this verse to say that since a thousand years is like a day to God, a day in the Creation account could very well be thousands or even millions of years.

(Note: Accommodationists have taken this verse out of context. Peter was discussing when Jesus would return. From man's finite perspective, it seemed like God was taking forever! But from God's infinite perspective, a thousand years was just a short wait.)

A plain reading of the Creation account will give the sense that phrases like "and evening passed and morning came" indicate a regular 24-hour day. Additionally, when God refers back to the six days, He refers to them as literal 24-hour periods. Consider the Sinai event when God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments. Concerning the Sabbath day of rest God had this to say:

Exodus 20:8–11

⁸ "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ You have six days each week for your ordinary work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy."

In this verse, there is no other way to understand "day" except that it is a regular 24-hour period. It would be foolish to think that God meant for the Israelites to work for six thousand years straight and then take one thousand years of rest. That would not be logical! God was saying, "Just as I worked a six-day week at Creation and rested one day, you will do the same to honour My work. The Sabbath day rest will distinguish you as being My people."

C. The New Testament took the Creation account literally.

How did Jesus Himself interpret the Old Testament and more specifically, Genesis? And how did the apostles interpret the Old Testament? Knowing this will give us some clues as to how we also should be interpreting them.

All of them treated Genesis as actual history. They took the people and events of Genesis 1–11 as real.

Here are a few examples:

- **Luke took Genesis literally (Genealogy of Jesus).**

Luke was a meticulous historian. In Luke 3:23–38, Luke presented the family tree of Jesus. His intention was to show that Jesus was the prophesied Saviour. He provided a history of Jesus' ancestors and finished off with a list of names from Genesis, ending with Adam as the son of God. If Luke were trying to make a case for Jesus as the Promised Saviour, why would he blend in mythical men with historical men? Or why would he leave out hundreds of thousands of people who were part of that genealogy? That would not make any sense. Instead, Luke viewed the entire list of men in the family tree as historical figures.

- **Jesus took Genesis literally.**

When Jesus was criticising the Pharisees in Luke 11, he accused them and their generation of being responsible for killing all of God's prophets starting from the creation of the world.

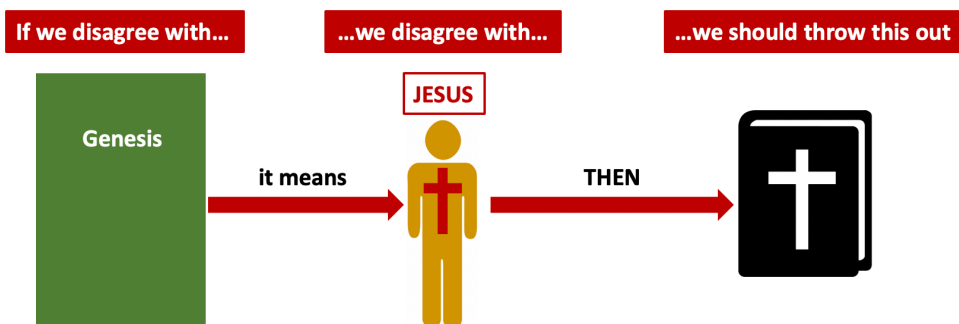
Luke 11:50–51

⁵⁰ “As a result, this generation will be held responsible for the murder of all God's prophets from the creation of the world— ⁵¹ from the murder of Abel to the murder of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, it will certainly be charged against this generation.”

Zechariah was clearly a real person. And Jesus referred to Abel, the son of Adam and Eve, as a real person too. Jesus would be foolish to talk about killing a non-existent, mythical person. Additionally, Jesus referred to Adam and Eve as real people when He talked about marriage. Jesus quoted from Genesis 1:27 and 2:24.

Matthew 19:4–6

⁴ “Haven't you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning 'God made them male and female.'” ⁵ And he said, “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” ⁶ Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.”



If we disagree with the Genesis account, we have to disagree with Jesus as well. If we disagree with Jesus, then we might as well throw out the whole Bible because Jesus Himself takes it literally.

• Paul took Genesis literally.

When the apostle Paul explained in the book of Romans how sin came into the world, he wrote about Adam, treating him as a real, historical person and contrasted Adam to Jesus.

Romans 5:12–13a, 18

¹² When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. ¹³ Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. ¹⁸ Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

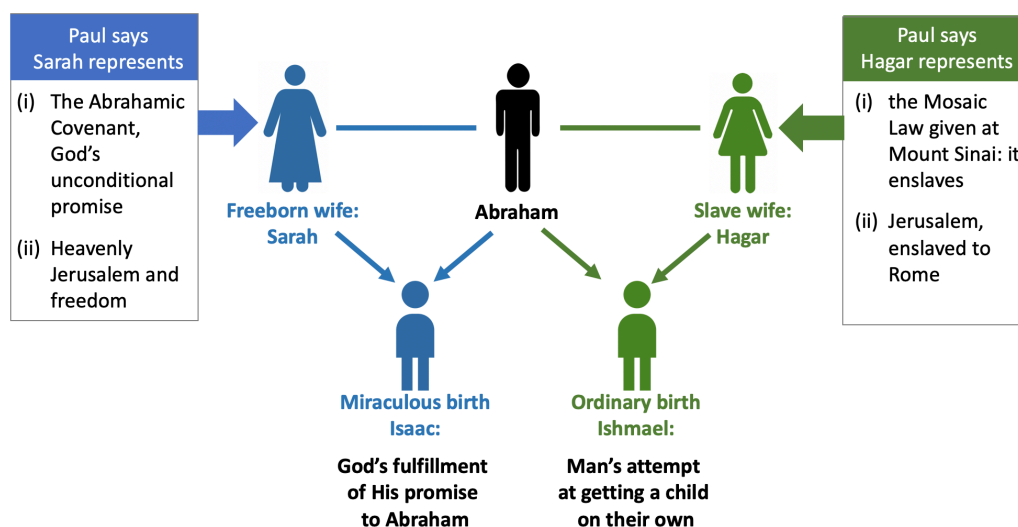
Paul's explanation of how the sin nature came to all people cannot be based on a mythical Adam. It would be ludicrous for Paul to contrast a mythical Adam to the real historical man of Jesus Christ.

D. When Paul is speaking figuratively, he says so.

Typically, as we have seen above, the apostle Paul would refer to historical events and people literally. However, in Galatians 4, he does something very different. He uses a historical account as an illustration. This is very rare, but when he does this, he announces it clearly that he is using Scripture figuratively.

Galatians 4:22–26

²² The Scriptures say that Abraham had two sons, one from his slave wife and one from his freeborn wife. ²³ The son of the slave wife was born in a human attempt to bring about the fulfillment of God's promise. But the son of the freeborn wife was born as God's own fulfillment of his promise. ²⁴ These two women serve as an illustration of God's two covenants. The first woman, Hagar, represents Mount Sinai where people received the law that enslaved them. ²⁵ And now Jerusalem is just like Mount Sinai in Arabia, because she and her children live in slavery to the law. ²⁶ But the other woman, Sarah, represents the heavenly Jerusalem. She is the free woman, and she is our mother.



In verse 24, Paul says clearly that he is using these two women as an “illustration” of a point he is about to make. Other translations use words and phrases like “this may be interpreted allegorically” (ESV), “these things are being taken figuratively” (NIV). When Paul himself means to use actual historical accounts to make an illustration or point, he states it clearly. Otherwise, Paul treats the Old Testament literally.

E. The Bible took genealogies seriously.

The Bible contains many genealogies listing the generations from Adam. We find the first genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11. These are very important because they record actual history and actual people. The Bible uses genealogies to show the flow of world history, the links between people groups and the geographies in which they lived, and the growth of families through the passage of time (Genesis 10:1–32).

In these records, at the birth of their first sons, the ages of the fathers are given. This means readers of the Bible can calculate how much time passed between each generation. It also tells us there are no gaps between the names. It is extremely problematic to try and squeeze in millions of years in the hope of claiming that there are gaps in Adam’s genealogy. If that were true, the Bible’s genealogy is inaccurate to the point of being useless since it would not even have covered 1% of the people.

F. The problem of treating science and the Bible as equally valid.

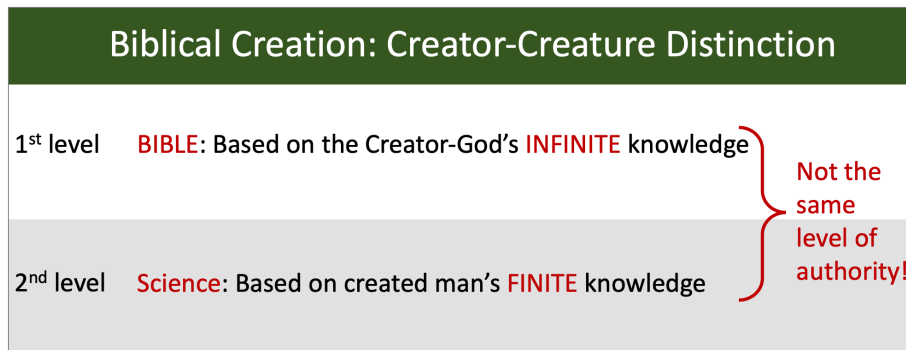
In the garden of Eden, Eve made the mistake of thinking that God’s words and Satan’s words were equally valid.

She ignored the Creator-creature distinction. She treated the words of the Creator-God of the universe with the same amount of credibility as she did the words of a created creature. She was wrong. God’s words must never be treated at the same level as words of any created being.



Biblical Creation: Creator-Creature Distinction		
1 st level	CREATOR: Yahweh’s Words	} Not the same level of authority!
2 nd level	Creature: Satan’s words	

Similarly, man’s theories, even if they include the word “science” should not be treated on par with the Bible as the inspired Word of the living God.



This is what the apostle Peter said about the written Word of God.

2 Peter 1:20–21

²⁰ Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding, ²¹ or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

Believers then, should not treat science as the ultimate authority on life. Science should not be treated as having more authority than the Word of God.

Aside from these two responses to the pagan worldview (“1. Surrender the truth” and “2. Accommodate and Reinterpret the truth”), churchgoers have a third response.

3. Counterattack the Falsehoods



The people who hold this view believe that the Bible is the true Word of God and contains no mistakes. Such Bible believers insist that Scripture is correct both in its spiritual truths and its physical descriptions of the world. It is the basis of all truth. It must not be adjusted to fit science or anything else whether it is geography, math, literature, psychology, etc. Rather, we need to understand the world through the lens of the Bible.

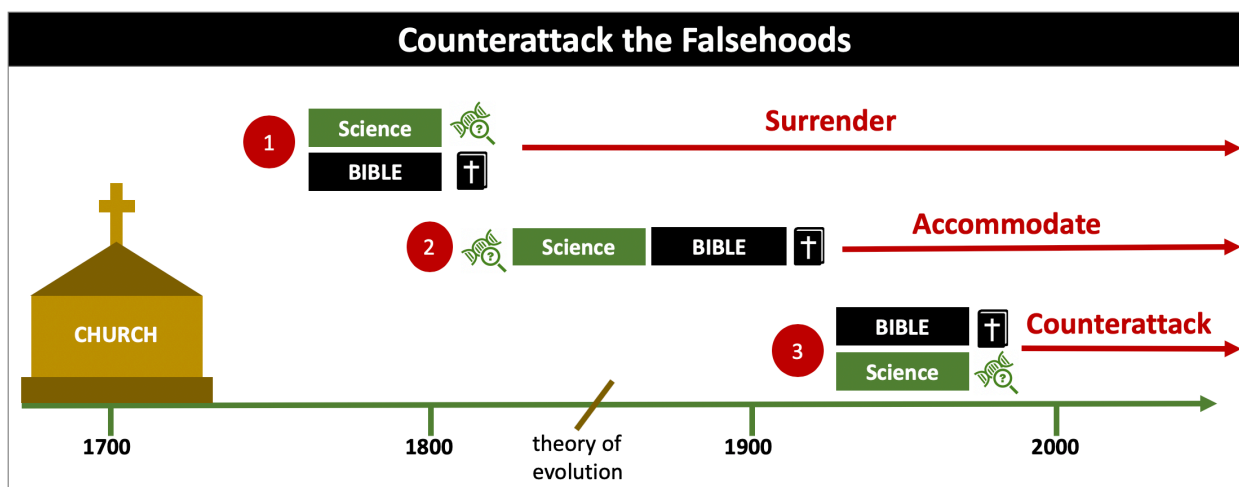


Such believers accept that what God has revealed in the Bible is accurate. They also acknowledge that mankind has limited and incomplete knowledge. Therefore, if these believers cannot match scientific data or science with what the Bible says, they surmise that science either has faulty data, incomplete data, or the theories are flawed.



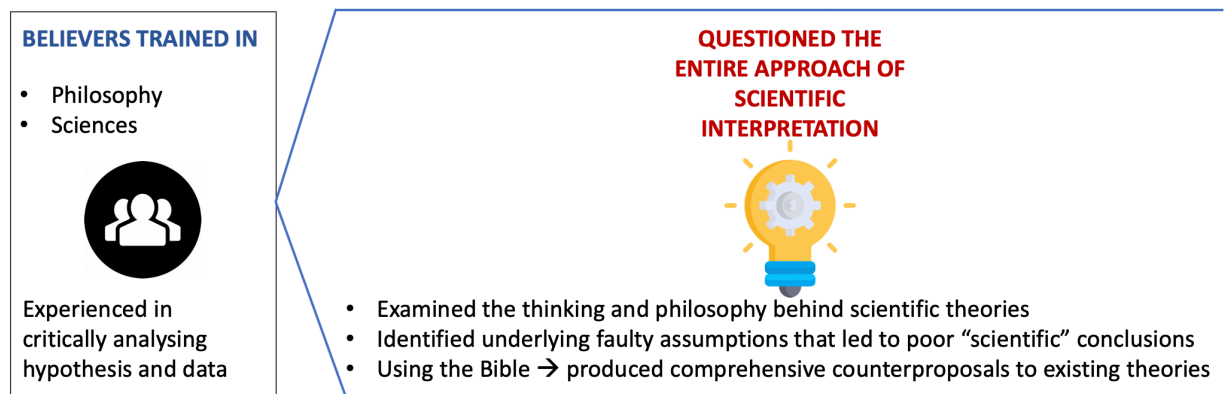
In addition, these believers also accept the possibility that the accounts revealed in Scripture contain events that science cannot repeat. For example, many of the physical processes (Creation, the global Flood, etc.) that the Bible describes are one-time, historical events and are therefore unrepeatable. It is not wise to think that the scientific processes we currently know have operated the same way at the beginning of time. The processes that God used to create the world itself are unknown and unrepeatable. If we try to take today's known scientific processes to create the world, it is not going to work! Whatever processes God used, He turned them off at the end of the sixth day.

When did churchgoers start to respond in this way? At around the 1950s and 1960s, many Bible-believing Christians became disillusioned with the strategy of accommodation and reinterpretation. They felt that the approach went against the whole teaching that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. They believed that somewhere in history, the church took a wrong turn in treating science as infallible.



However, this rethinking did not originate in Bible schools. Instead, the believers who led this charge to rethink the Christian response to science came from the secular world. They were believers trained in the sciences and other relevant disciplines like philosophy. They were experienced in critically analysing data and hypotheses.

What was their strategy? They did not think it wise to counterattack one scientific theory here or another detail there. Instead, they decided to address the entire approach of scientific interpretation. They focused on understanding and tackling the thinking or philosophy behind the scientific theories and came to the conclusion that pagan and non-biblical beliefs, assumptions and presuppositions had contaminated much of modern scientific thought. They showed that the underlying faulty assumptions often led to poor science. Then drawing from the perspective of the Bible, God's own testimony of how He created the world, these believers produce more comprehensive scientific counterproposals to the existing theories such as evolution.



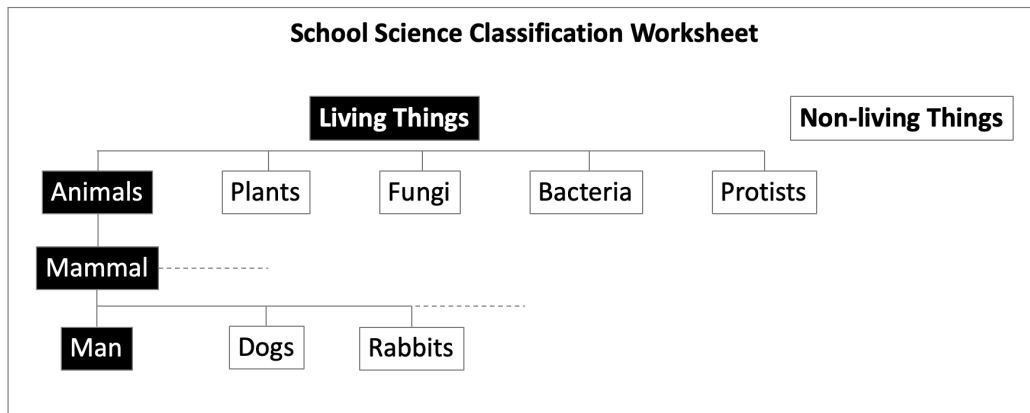
Today, there are a growing number of credible, Christian scientists who have taken on the counterattack model. They humble themselves under the authority of God's Word and work to produce credible scientific models to explain how the scientific evidence fits neatly into the Bible's account without needing to give up the truth or accommodate. There are numerous books and websites that present research from a wide range of disciplines including nuclear physics, geology and mathematics.

Here are several organisations and their websites that are worth exploring:

- **Answers in Genesis**— www.answersingenesis.org
- **Creation Ministries International** — www.creation.com
- **Institute for Creation Research** — www.icr.org
- **Creation Research Society** — www.creationresearch.org
- **Creation Moments** — www.creationmoments.com
- **Cornwall Alliance** — www.cornwallalliance.org

Is man an animal?

In school, one of the first things that students learn in science is the classification of animals. Children are first taught to categorise things into living and non-living classes. Then living things are categorised into five kingdoms: animals, plants, fungi, bacteria, and protists (single-celled organisms). Focusing just on animals, students learn how these are grouped together based on common characteristics. Students then learn that man is classified as a mammal. Man is just a creature like any of the other animals in the animal kingdom!



A believer who holds to the “counterattack” model will note that secular science teaches evolution ideas at a young age.

A believer should recognise at once that man, according to the Bible, is not like the other animals. Man is unique, created in the image of God. Mankind is given the role of the under-lord, to take care of the animals. Man himself is not an animal. If one had a “surrender” or “accommodate” model, one would end up accepting that man was an animal and this would lead to a clash with what the Bible teaches.

YAHWEH Says that Man is:

- Made in the image of God
- Unique, not like any other creation
- Given the role of under-lord over creation

Secular science is a slippery slope because its assumptions and presuppositions exclude God and remove the Bible as the final authority. As Bible believers, we must take hold of the “counterattack” model and be on the lookout for faulty science pushed across to us as truth.

Can science really determine the age of the earth?

Sometimes, the word “science” is used to talk about everything that happens in the natural world. However, we need to know that there is a difference between “operational or observational science” and “historical science”.

Observational science is where we can do experiments today to confirm theories or hypotheses. We can repeat experiments to verify what others have discovered about the world.

Historical science is a whole lot more tricky. This is because we do not have access to all the information needed to actually get a good answer. Nor can we conduct a test to confirm or disprove a theory.

Here is an example.

The candle experiment

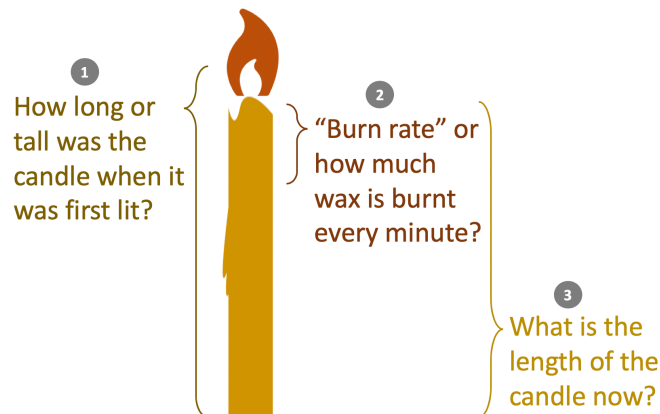
Imagine you opened a door and walked into a room. On the table in the middle of the room, you see a candle burning. Then your friend comes in and asks when the candle was lit.

Would you be able to tell him? There are two methods to get an answer.

Method #1: Collect the right pieces of data and then do some calculations.

If you had the correct information, you could find out when the candle was lit by calculating how long it has been burning. You need the following data:

- i. the length of the candle before it was lit
- ii. the burn rate, or how much wax is burnt every minute
- iii. the length of the candle now.



Here’s the equation:

$$\text{How long has the candle been burning?} = \left(\text{Length of whole candle} - \text{Length of candle now} \right) \div \text{“Burn rate” or how much wax is burnt every minute}$$

But if you could not get one of these three pieces of data, this method would not work.

The second piece of data, the burn rate, is particularly problematic.

To have an accurate burn rate, you would need to record how much of the candle was burnt every single minute, from the start (when the candle was first lit) to the present moment. This is because any variation would change the burn rate. For example, if there were a breeze going through the room for 30 minutes, that would make the candle burn faster for that time period! If you were not around for those 30 minutes, you would never know that the burn rate had increased. And who knows what other conditions were present to change the candle's burn rate. The only way to obtain an accurate burn rate would be to take an average of all the different rates during the whole period of the candle burning and not just one sample burn rate.

Method #2: Ask the person who actually lit the candle what time he did it.

This is the most accurate as he is the one who lit the candle. Or you could also ask an eyewitness what time the candle was lit.

Dating the age of the earth

Let's take these two methods and apply it to finding out how old the earth is. We'll start with Method #1.

Method #1

As with figuring out when the candle was first lit, historical science is also tricky. When trying to estimate the age of the earth, scientists face the problem of not having the data needed to calculate when the earth first began. They don't know:

- What the earth was like when it was first created ("the length of the whole candle")
- All the historical change processes that have taken place on the earth since it began ("the burn rate").

No one has the historical data of all the change processes of the earth since it first began. We cannot simply use the "burn rate" (that is, the scientific data) we can measure today because we do not know all the variations to the historical "burn rate" so to speak.

With critical pieces of data missing, we can't use Method #1 to calculate the earth's age.

An additional challenge: a mature earth

And here's an additional challenge to using "scientific data" to date the age of the earth. God did not create Adam and Eve as babies and then wait for them to grow up. No, the Bible tells us that God created them as adults. In fact, God created the earth as a mature earth. At the end of Day 6 as God was looking around, He said that it was very good. He was looking at the completed creation, not a half-done one, nor a "baby" creation. Creation was sudden and quick. And then God turned off the creation process.

If we could be at Day 6 of Creation and take photos and videos of the garden of Eden, we would see a grown man and woman amidst lush vegetation and full-grown animals. If we

were to then show these pictures and videos to a friend from today, what would our friend say about Adam's age or the age of the garden? This would be a possible conversation:

Friend: "I'm guessing that Adam looks maybe 25 years old? And those trees! They are so huge and tall. They must be at least a hundred years old."

If you told Adam what your friend said, what would his response be?

Adam: "No, I'm just a few hours old. And God told me He had just created the earth. I'm certainly not 25 years old and that tree is not a hundred years old."

In other words, because of the supernatural way God created the earth, one cannot tell just by looking how old creation actually is. It looks older than it really is.

Method #2

If we want to find out the age of the earth with this method, we need to seek either eyewitnesses to the beginning of the earth or ask the One who created the earth. Were there any human eyewitnesses to the event of creation? No. This is what the Creator-God told a man named Job.

Job 38:1–4

¹ Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind:

² "Who is this that questions my wisdom
with such ignorant words?"

³ Brace yourself like a man,
because I have some questions for you,
and you must answer them.

⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell me, if you know so much.

Job wasn't present when God created the world. No human was. God only created the first people, Adam and Eve, on day 6.

So we have no human eyewitnesses but we do have the testimony, or account, of the One who created the earth—Yahweh Himself. God records for us in Genesis 1 that He personally created the earth from nothing. In fact, He created the universe just by speaking. God said He created the universe in just six days.

Science is based on worldviews

We now have a choice. We can choose to believe the testimony of the Creator-God or we can choose to believe the "scientific conclusions" of scientists who rely on incomplete and insufficient "historical science" to calculate how old the earth is.

One significant issue with "historical science" is what some scientists already believe about God. Their underlying beliefs, or assumptions, affect their science. Unbelieving scientists

assume there is no God and so take Him out of the picture entirely and refuse to believe His own recorded account of creation.

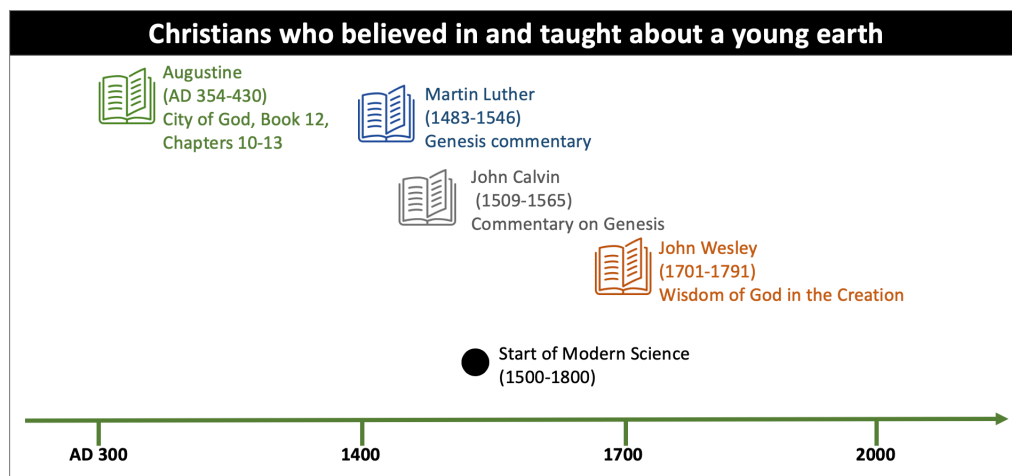
Biblical Creator-Creature Distinction	Pagan Worldview
1 st level CREATOR: Sustains Everything	1st level CREATOR <i>No such thing</i>
2 nd level creature: nature, man	2nd level creature: nature, man <i>sustains itself naturally</i>

Why do they do that? By default, the pagan worldview has always assumed all matter has been around forever in one form or another. It teaches the continuity of being: gas, planets, stars, electrons, rocks, animals and man are all part of the same nature. It has always been this way from eternity past to eternity future.



Using the pagan worldview as the foundation of their thinking, many unbelieving modern scientists use this worldview, a worldview without God, to come to the conclusion that the earth is very, very, very old.

What did the Christians believe? Many believed and taught about a young earth. The following are several well-known theologians who believed the Bible’s account of creation.



In fact, many of the early modern scientists were Bible-believing Christians and they too held to a young earth of 6,000 years as the Bible records. Their attitude towards science is captured by this Bible verse:

Proverbs 25:2

It is God's privilege to conceal things
and the king's privilege to discover them.

These believing scientists held the Bible as the ultimate source of truth. Using God's Word, they would study God's creation and they would glorify God for how intricately and carefully He had designed the world.

Many schools today teach about an old earth as fact, treating such unprovable "historical science" as if it were on the same level as "observational science". Students are taught that this is the truth. But is it really?

God is not against science. In fact He wants us to discover, marvel and enjoy His creation. And thank Him and worship Him.

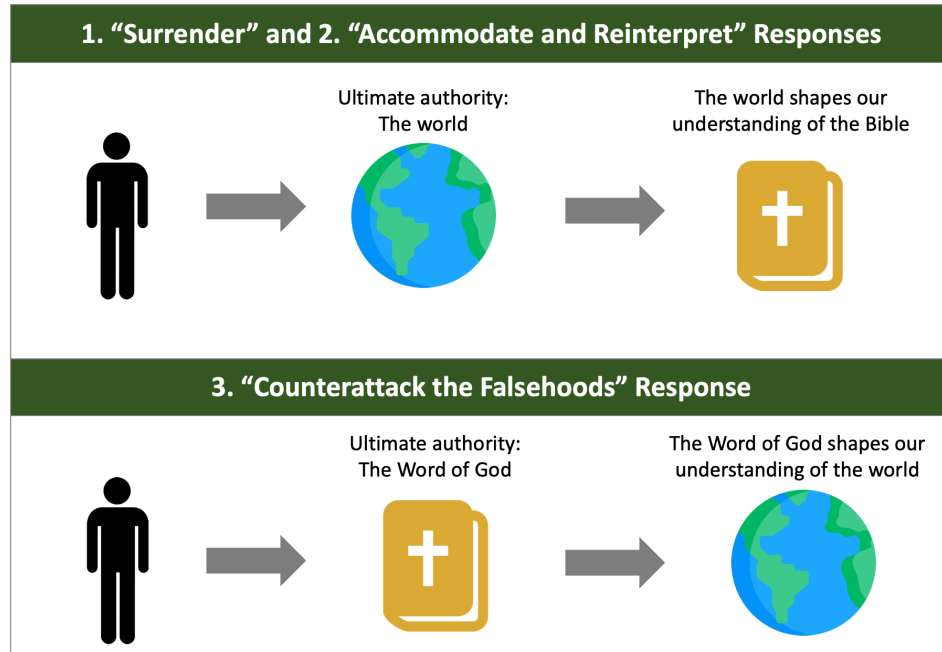
But let us not be careless to say that all "science" is reflective of the world God created. The age of the earth cannot be answered by people who were not there and who lack the needed information or data to make reasonable calculations. The Bible is a record of God's own eyewitness account of creation. It is the only reliable source of truth.

Who is Our Authority?

We have spent some time looking at three responses that believers have when they try to compare what the Bible says with what the world says. The underlying principle is this: Who is the final authority?

- Is it the Word of God? Do we try to understand the world from God's point of view and then look at the world through a biblical worldview?
- Or do we place ourselves in the position of authority and decide to use the pagan worldview to interpret the meaning of the Bible?





Is it true that all this discussion on scientific theories and the creation/evolution debate does not matter? After all, they do not impact the gospel, our faith, or our trust in Scripture.

This entire topic is not small or easy to handle and as believers, we mustn't be naive or simple-minded about it. People in church have thought, studied and struggled with this for many years. Today, among churchgoers, there exist all three responses.

Because the debate has been long-running, oftentimes emotional and difficult to resolve, it is no wonder that many believers would rather ignore the whole topic and see it as of secondary importance. However, it is helpful to understand the implications of holding one view versus the others. Here are some thoughts:

"Surrender" and "Accommodate and Reinterpret" destroy the authority of the Bible.

Those who choose these responses are actually judging God and His Word. They are saying they have the authority to decide if a Bible passage is just a story or an allegory. And they can decide if a word actually means this or that or something else. When we put ourselves in authority over Scripture, we are doing exactly what Satan did in the garden of Eden.

Satan put this same idea in man's mind. He said to Eve: "Did God really say..." (Genesis 3:1) His intent was to cast doubt over the "real" meaning of what God "intended" to say. He suggested that Adam and Eve could



indeed reinterpret God's words. Such ideas destroy the authority of the Bible. It puts man in authority over God.

If even the first two chapters of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, cannot be trusted, how can we trust the rest of the Bible?

The reality is that there is a tension between Genesis and the teachings and beliefs of the world. However, Genesis, especially the first 11 chapters, are critical. They introduce:

1. creation
2. fall
3. sin
4. judgment and
5. need for a Saviour.

This is essentially the content of the gospel. It tells us why the gospel is necessary.

If we treat Genesis as myth rather than history, then the rest of the Bible would not make any sense. Why would there be need for a Saviour when it is just a story? The whole Bible would be irrelevant.

In addition, if we read Genesis as myth, how would we know which other parts of the Bible are myth and which are real? How can we know what to believe and what not to believe? Does God actually want man to decide this? Or does God intend for everyone to submit to the Bible as the final authority on all matters?

If God intended to use the Bible as His personal revelation to man, it would be wise to assume He does want to communicate clearly. Therefore, we should read the Bible in the way that is obvious by the context. It should be read in a literal and historical manner, unless the context informs us it is an allegory or that it is a metaphor. So when God says He personally made the first man and woman, we should take that literally. To read it in any other way is not being honest with the text.

A lot of theology is based on the historical accuracy of Genesis.

Here are two examples:

- **Salvation:** Salvation is necessary only if we believe there was a real man called Adam who rebelled against God. If Adam were a made-up character, there is no real sin, no sin nature and therefore no need for a Saviour. Also, the New Testament would not be believable because it talks about Adam as a real man. (For example: Romans 5:12–21; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22.)
- **Marriage:** Jesus talks about marriage in the context of Genesis. In Matthew 19:4, He references Genesis 2:24.

While it is wise not to get totally caught up with this debate and lose focus on everything else, we need to also be aware of the implications it has on the rest of Scripture and our beliefs.

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions as a group or use them for personal reflection.

1. In your own mind, how have you treated the Bible? Is it the ultimate authority in your life or is something else, like science? Why is this so?
2. Looking at the three models (“Give up the Truth”, “Accommodate and Reinterpret”, “Counterattack the Falsehoods”), which one best describes your way of thinking? How did you arrive at this way of thinking?
3. How do you deal with other believers who want to “give up the truth” or “accommodate and reinterpret”? How do you deal with unbelievers who want to debate the scientific validity of the Bible?



Pre-reading for next lesson: Genesis 6:1–8:19