



IS GENESIS HISTORY?

READER VOLUME 1

**10 COMPELLING
ARGUMENTS FOR
BIBLICAL CREATION**

10 COMPELLING ARGUMENTS FOR BIBLICAL CREATION

Thomas Purifoy Jr.
Director & Writer of *Is Genesis History?*

Includes 10 articles originally published on
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IS GENESIS HISTORY?

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1 | Why Is Genesis So Important Today?

Let's be honest: the first chapters of Genesis are pretty controversial.

There are a lot of things in them that make people uncomfortable. As a result, some people in seminaries and academia are seeking to replace the history recorded in Genesis with a different history, one supposedly based on the recent findings of evolutionary science.

That's the primary reason we made the documentary *Is Genesis History*.

We think the events and people included in those chapters are very important. They are part of a real history that Christians need to know actually happened. Furthermore, they need to know it is a history confirmed by the world around us.

1. Genesis is the Foundation of the Gospel

Everything starts with Adam. If Adam did not bring sin and death into the world, then Christ did not need to come save us.

Paul understood that. It's why he compares Adam with Jesus: "For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor 15:21) Paul even refers to Jesus as "the last Adam."

Luke understood it, too. He links Jesus to Adam through a single, complete genealogy. He then tells us Jesus went into the desert to be tempted by Satan; Jesus was mirroring the temptation of Adam, but this time to obey.

Jesus knew what His mission was: undo the sentence of death on humanity and the curse of corruption on creation. No Adam, no sin -- no sin, no death and corruption -- no death and corruption, no point for Jesus.

Jesus came to save us *because* Genesis is history. As D. Martin Lloyd-Jones said, “I have no gospel unless Genesis is history.”



2. Genesis is the Solution for our Culture

If culture is the way people choose to order their lives, then Genesis is where God shows us His order for culture.

We all know there are strange cultural ideas being embraced today. What is rare to hear, however, is someone in the public square point to Genesis as the reason why something should or should not be done. As a result, there are a lot of people in the pews and kids in youth groups who need to hear what Genesis has to say about culture.

Take the transgender issue: if God created man in his own image as male and female, then we are essentially male and female from the beginning. Our sex can't be changed.

Or take marriage: if God created Eve to marry Adam and have children, they are the pattern for all men and women. Two men or two women cannot marry each other.

Or consider climate change/global warming: if God told Noah after the Flood He would never destroy the earth again with water, and that seasons (i.e., the climate) would remain the same for seedtime and harvest, then there's no need to fear any future climate issues.

The list goes on and on: life, economics, environmental stewardship, technology, food, science... Genesis is the ultimate counter-cultural book that provides the standard for how we should order our lives.



Del Tackett talking to Todd Wood about the hominid fossil record.

3. Genesis is being Reinterpreted by Evolutionists

There is an influential movement today that many Christians are unaware of. Its goal is to re-introduce Darwinian evolution into Christian theology. This idea is called ‘theistic evolution’ or ‘evolutionary creation.’ The primary group pushing this view is Biologos. On its website it has a lot of well-known Christians and thinkers (many of whom I respect) saying good things about it.

The organization is teaching heresy. It was seen to be heresy back in the 19th century when Asa Gray, an American scientist and friend of Charles Darwin, tried to take Darwin’s new history of the world and use it to reinterpret Genesis.

Darwin didn't think this was possible. After all, the whole point of his theory was to *replace* the Genesis account. Nevertheless, some theologians and scientists have tried to merge the two histories and attempt to hold onto the gospel.

It is the devil's delusion. Here are some of the heresies that theistic evolutionists promote that contradict the Biblical account:

- There were hundreds of millions of years of death in the world before Adam sinned;
- The creation has always been subject to corruption;
- Adam and Eve were just two hominids out of group of hominid-type creatures that pre-dated them by hundreds of thousands of years;
- There are no unique created kinds since everything goes back to a common bacterial ancestor;
- God used evolution (which progresses through killing off the unfit) as the primary way to create everything we see.

Clearly, this is a completely different history of the world than the one taught in Genesis. Biologos is well-funded and spends a lot of money trying to influence pastors and seminary students. But it is dangerous: not only is it teaching bad theology, it is presenting unsound scientific theories.



The Grand Staircase in Utah: 10,000 feet of rock. Steve Austin discusses it in “Beyond Is Genesis History? Vol 1”

4. The History in Genesis is Confirmed by the World around Us

The thesis of our film is that Genesis is an accurate book of history.

In light of that, the events it records can be confirmed by studying the world around us. From the huge layers of sediment stacked across the continents and filled with fossils (evidence of a global flood) to the mutually-dependent, interrelated complexity of endless biological systems and ecosystems (evidence of six day creation) to the reality of death, sin, and corruption everywhere (evidence of a universal Fall), Genesis gives us a history that is dependable and reliable.

In the film, Del Tackett spends time with over a dozen scientists explaining the world around us in light

of the history recorded in Genesis. They represent just a fraction of the hundreds of scientists who see Genesis as a true and accurate record of the history of the world.

Ultimately, it comes back to the authority of scripture. Just as Jesus, Peter, Paul, Luke, and John saw Genesis as a historical authority, so should we. When Christians recognize that Genesis is actually history, it will change the way they view everything else.



IS
GENESIS
HISTORY?

HOSTED BY DEL TACKETT
CREATOR OF "THE TRUTH PROJECT"

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IS GENESIS HISTORY?

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2 | What Did Jesus and Luke Say About Genesis?

“For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” - Jesus of Nazareth

The Thread of History

I teach a filmmaking class to a small group of homeschoolers. We spend the first few weeks going through key people in film history who died before any of us were born: Thomas Edison, the Lumière brothers, D.W. Griffith, Charlie Chaplin, Sergei Eisenstein, and so forth. I talk about how these were real people who did something important - invent a camera, a way of filmmaking - that can be connected to what we are doing as filmmakers today.

This pulling of the thread of history can be done with anything: business, science, technology, government, education - everything is linked back to real people and events that lived and happened sometime in the past. We could even say that the present is unchangeably connected to the past through an unbroken chain of real individuals.

That seems to be the view of the writers of the New Testament. They regularly refer back to people and events that happened long before them but which are still connected to their lives in the first century AD.

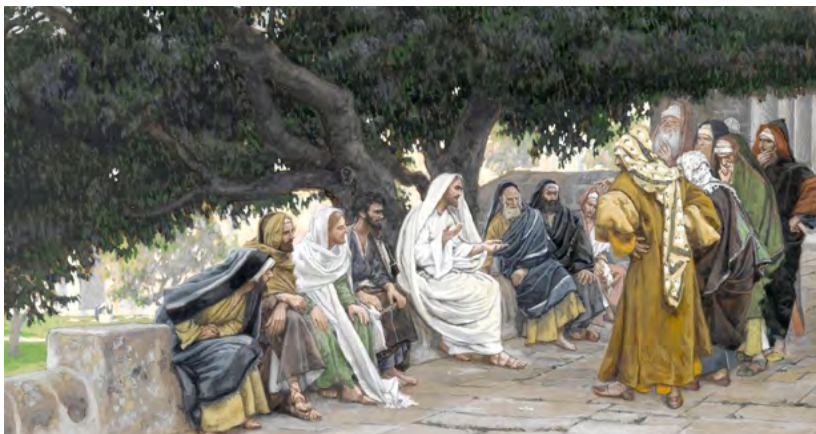
This is one of the key assumptions of our project on Genesis: people like Paul, Luke, Jesus, Peter, and John refer to the people and events of Genesis as

real history. They talk about them like we talk about historical people and events that had an impact on our lives today.

What exactly do the writers of the New Testament say about the people and events of Genesis? It's helpful to see what they actually say, so let's plow through a number of interesting quotes.

Genesis according to Jesus

One of Jesus' favorite methods was to ask people if they had read a passage from the Old Testament. This is a good approach: start with the text. In talking about divorce, Jesus asks: "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?'" (Matthew 19:4-5)



Jesus obviously had read Genesis 1 and 2 because He's quoting it. We don't often think about Jesus

reading the Old Testament, but He did. As a well-taught Jewish boy in the first century, He would have gone through the normal Torah instruction all boys His age did.

He knew that Genesis says Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day of creation. According to Jesus, that sixth day of creation was “from the beginning,” a phrase we hear a number of times in the New Testament. It refers to the beginning of creation as recorded in Genesis 1.

In other words, Jesus is pointing out that Adam and Eve were real people who were created in the beginning to be married only to each other. He wants to remind His listeners *when* they were created so they would know it has always been that way; as a result, their pretensions to divorce were against the creation order established at the start of all things. According to Jesus, Adam and Eve were two real people created to be married at a real time, and his listeners would be wise to understand the importance of that.



In another passage, Matthew records how Jesus condemns the pharisees and scribes for their blatant hypocrisy. Not one to mince words, He tells them God sent them the prophets to kill “so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah...”(Matthew 23:35) According to Jesus, Abel was a real person whose blood was shed by his brother, but whose punishment would fall onto all those who rejected God’s prophets.

Finally, right before His death, Jesus tells His disciples key details about His return saying: “For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” (Matthew 24:37-39)

I find this interesting for a number of reasons. First, not only does Jesus know the catastrophic historical events recorded in Genesis 6 and 7, but He also knows His audience is familiar with them. Their prior understanding of the flood’s unexpected, total destruction is the basis for His comparison.

Second, Jesus describes the normal actions of the people living in Noah’s day as “unaware” that a flood was coming. This is how we hear people describe natural disasters; they are consistently surprised by them. It is an interesting note of historical authenticity that plays into His comparison.

Third, Jesus says the flood swept them all away. The fact that Jesus is linking an event where “all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind” to His eventual return, means something about that return. It’s going to be big, and it’s going to affect everyone.

According to Jesus, Noah, the ark, and a global flood that killed all the birds, beasts, and people on the earth, were as historically real as His second coming. They are a historical preview of coming attractions that everyone would be wise to remember in terms of their *timing* and *scope*.

This is one of the many reasons the idea that Noah’s flood was a local flood somewhere in the Middle East is a misguided interpretation. It does not fit the language of Genesis, well-known to both Jesus and His disciples, which is central to His comparison. Were the flood recorded in Genesis just local, it would make Jesus’ comparison be that ‘my return is going to be local, and it’s going to affect a few living creatures.’ But that’s not what either Jesus or Genesis says.

The fact that Jesus was well acquainted with the actual words of Genesis and knew them to be real history is why it is such a powerful statement. If Noah was not real, or if everyone in the world was not killed, or if the flood was not global, then Jesus’ comments make no sense. As He might say to a modern audience debating Noah and the extent of the flood, “Have you not read what I said about them?”



Genesis According to Luke

Luke is probably the best historian of the New Testament. I say this for two reasons. First, he did not personally witness most of the events he wrote about, but instead “having followed all things closely for some time past” decided “to write an orderly account” concerning the life of Jesus and the early church. This means he had to interview people and read things written by others to “compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us.” (Luke 1:1-3)

Second, Luke takes great care to link the events he’s writing about to the generally-accepted calendar markers of his day. These include governmental posts and reigns of emperors. He also took time to research

the family genealogical lists of Joseph and Mary's line to show how Jesus' physical descent was linked back in time through real people.

There is nothing more basic to understanding the links making up history than a genealogical list. Although they are often skipped over by modern readers, in the first century they would have been of primary importance. This is why they start both Matthew's and Luke's gospels; they are intentionally different, too, since one is royal and the other physical - both important lineages for Jesus being the Christ.

In the third chapter of his gospel, Luke finishes his account of Jesus' baptism by quoting the words of God from heaven: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." This statement from God provides us Jesus' direct divine lineage. But knowing that Jesus was both God and man, Luke proceeds to show how he is linked back to Adam, the first son of God.

And so Luke plows through the 70-odd men who are physically related to Jesus, going back through David, Abraham, Noah, and ending with "Adam, the son of God." This is basically a genealogical timeline of the world from the beginning of creation to Jesus. Luke clearly sees all these names as real men who conceived sons with their wives (the possibility of Levirate marriage naturally included). In one sense, genealogy just lists the chain links of history.

Furthermore, Luke goes on in his next section to show us that both Jesus and Adam hold similar roles in the history of the world. Luke assumes his readers know about the history recorded in Genesis 3 (a

temptation of the “first man” by Satan in a bountiful garden), so that they will understand what happened to Jesus (a temptation of the “last man” by Satan in a wilderness, the barren result of God’s curse on His creation).

The point here is that Luke is intimately aware of the history recorded in Genesis. According to Luke, all the people he lists out in his genealogy are real people who lived at real times whose actions had real consequences. This is, after all, what good historians do: they show how different events that happen in history are related.

In fact, the relationship between Jesus and Adam is *the most important relationship in all of history*. It is central to the gospel and what Jesus came to do. We can therefore do no better than to end with the apostle Paul’s explanation of what these men did that has the utmost impact on our lives today:

“For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were

made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.” (Romans 5:15-18)



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3 | 6 Reasons Christians Should Embrace 6-Day Creation

When *Is Genesis History?* opened in theaters last year, we had no idea it would be the top grossing Christian documentary for 2017. We were even more surprised when our distributor said they were bringing it back to theaters on Feb 22, 2018 for an Anniversary Event.

Why did this film resonate so much with audiences?

Perhaps it demonstrated that it's intellectually reasonable for Christians to embrace 6-day creation.

By '6-day creation,' I'm referring not just to one's view of Genesis 1, but to an entire chronology of historical events. These include the immediate creation of everything in six normal days, a Fall that brought corruption and death into the universe, and a global Flood that destroyed the world.

I recognize that among some Christians this is not a popular view of history. Instead, some have adopted the framework hypothesis, analogical days, or the cosmic-temple model to interpret Genesis 1.

They then accept the conventional chronology of universal history. This includes the slow formation of everything over billions of years starting with a Big Bang, the corruption and death of trillions of creatures before the arrival of Adam and Eve, a Fall that

introduced death only to mankind, and a local flood during the days of Noah.

I realize that intelligent and godly Christians hold to this model of Earth history. Nevertheless, many seem unaware of the actual events they must inevitably adopt when affirming a 13.8 billion-year-old universe.

After all, one cannot extend history for billions of years without attaching new events to it. Those events have theological consequences.

This is why thinkers like Geerhardus Vos, Louis Berkhof, and D. Martin Lloyd-Jones embraced 6-day creation. They understood it is the events included in 6-day creation that are essential for Christian theology.

Here are six theological reasons worth considering:

1. God's Goodness Must Be Reflected in the Original Creation

Ligon Duncan observed in an interview for 'The Gospel Coalition' that affirming the goodness of the original creation is non-negotiable. As the Westminster Confession states, the goodness of the original creation is the manifestation of the glory of God's own goodness. (WCF 4.1)

What does that goodness look like? It is full of life-giving power and bounty.



This is what we see in Genesis 1. God pronounces His original creation ‘good’ and ‘very good.’ It was a world of plenty and beauty without animal carnivory (Gen 1:30) and without corruption and death (Rom 8:21).

Yet this picture of an artistically-designed, beautiful world only fits within the chronology of 6-day creation.

If one adopts the conventional chronology, one must accept that the Earth was absent from the universe for its first 9 billion years. After a galactic cooling event, the Earth slowly formed through billions of years of uninhabitable environments. God eventually created the first complex marine life, then progressively created or evolved different types of organisms. These experienced death and massive extinction events that led to the destruction of trillions of living creatures.

All this happened long before the appearance of Adam and Eve.

I realize that some Christians may not be interested in these sorts of details. Yet anyone who chooses to accept an old universe implicitly accepts the historical events that go with it. It is a history filled with lifelessness and death, not the goodness of God.

2. Adam's Sin Resulted in Universal Corruption and Death

According to the conventional chronology, corruption has always been a part of the universe. This can be seen in the fossil record which supposedly represents 540 million years of animal suffering and death. It provides snapshots of a world often full of thorns and thistles.



In this view, Adam's sin could not have been the ultimate cause of universal corruption. As an historical event, his disobedience occurred long after corruption was present.

But according to 6-day creation, Adam's sin precedes God's curse on the creation. The suffering and death of animals came as a result of Adam's disobedience, not prior to it. Thorns and thistles were a part of the curse, not before it.

This is what Paul affirms in Romans 8:21. It is what Christian theology has always affirmed: Adam was given dominion over the entire creation at the beginning; when he sinned, the entire creation was subjected to corruption as a consequence of its unique relationship to him.

3. The Pattern of Creation-Fall-Redemption Culminates in the New Creation

If the universe contained death and corruption that wasn't the result of Adam's sin, what does that mean for Jesus's redemption of both man and creation?

Consider His miracles: He was re-forming the world according to the goodness of the original creation. Whether Jesus was healing the sick, raising the dead, or feeding the hungry, He was showing that redemption results in tangible bounty to actual people. It is a goodness that culminates with the new creation. Passages in the Prophets and Revelation suggest a return to the space-time goodness of the original creation.

Yet it is only the chronology of 6-day creation that provides the historical framework for this pattern to have meaning.

If the original creation was not good, or if the Fall did not transform that creation into something evil, then

what is the real nature of our redemption? And what is the real potential of the new creation?

For the bookends of creation to match, they must be mirrors of each other. This is only possible with 6-day creation.

4. Scripture Must be Used to Interpret Scripture

In the *Odyssey*, when Penelope wants to prove her husband's identity, she requests he shoot an arrow through 12 axe handles placed in a row. She knows he is the only one who can do it. In the same way, although different interpretations claim to be accurate, only those which pass intact through the entirety of the Bible are true.

This is what we see with the events associated with 6-day creation: they are affirmed throughout the entire Bible.



Whether it is Moses connecting creation week with a normal week in the fourth commandment; or Isaiah affirming God created man at the same time He created the heavens and the earth; or Jesus explaining the global destruction of the Flood in light of His second coming; or Luke tracing the history of the world through a single genealogy; or Paul relating the work of Adam to the work of Christ; or Peter showing the relationship between the creation, global flood, and judgment to come, there is only one historical sequence that consistently fits: 6-day creation.

5. Essential Doctrines are Related to History

Last year, I had lunch with a friend who takes a more liberal view of the Bible. As he heard what was in the film, he said, “if there really was a global flood, that changes everything.” This is similar to the line of thinking we see in Acts: if a man really rose from the dead, that changes everything.

Paul establishes the necessary connection between the events of history and Christian doctrine in 1 Corinthians 15. Peter does the same in 2 Peter 3 with creation, the flood, and the final judgment.

Yet it is only within the historical framework of 6-day creation that all these events cohere to the fabric of time.

For instance, if the thick fossil-bearing rock layers are the result of a global flood, they are a physical reminder of God’s global judgment on the earth in the past—as well as in the future.

If, however, one adopts the conventional chronology, those huge layers are merely a testimony to millions of years. God’s judgment is erased from the earth—and perhaps overlooked in the future.

6. Presuppositional Thinking Helps Us Understand the Discipline of Science

Finally, what about science itself?

When I started researching our documentary, I came across a book entitled *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* by Thomas Kuhn. Although there is much that could be said about Kuhn, his method is easy for philosophically-minded Christians to grasp: he applies presuppositional thinking to the discipline of science.

Anyone who has read Christian philosopher Cornelius Van Til can see the similarities between them:

Both point out that data is not “value-neutral,” but that people bring a ‘set of glasses’ toward the interpretation of the world around them. Both recognize the intense commitment people have toward certain views to the exclusion of all others. Both note that groups consistently interpret what they observe in light of their base presuppositions.



Now what makes Kuhn interesting is that he explores the history of science in light of this thinking. The result is that he effectively questions the absolute epistemological authority of modern science.

Again, this should not be surprising - we are well aware of the implications of presuppositional thinking. But I would hope it would give Christians pause who seem to place an enormous amount of trust in the latest ideas of scientists concerning the conventional history of the world — a history which happened long before any of them even existed.

As Isaiah might remind us, “*Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?*” (Isaiah 2:22, ESV)

In Closing

I regret the abbreviated nature of these thoughts. They are only a few of the many I arrived at during my three year process researching this film. I have explored them at greater depth in the [Is Genesis History? Bible Study](#) that accompanies the film.

In closing, it is my strongest conviction as a Christian that 6-day creation is the only long-term viable option for Christian theology. As D. Martin Lloyd-Jones said, “I have no gospel unless Genesis is history.”

This post was originally featured on Challies.com in a slightly modified form.



4 | What are the Two Views of Earth History?

There are two basic views concerning the history of the earth, with the essential difference being their views of *time*.

1. The young earth, **Historical Genesis** view says the earth and universe are less than 10,000 years old and that the events recorded in Genesis happened in a literal way.
2. The old earth, **Conventional** view says the earth is approximately 4.5 billion years old and the universe is 13.7 billion years old, with differing parts of Genesis 1-11 being symbolic or non-literal.

All who hold to the **Conventional** view agree on what may be termed *cosmic* evolution or development (the first 9 billion years of the universe) as well as *geological* evolution or development (the next 4.5 billion years when the earth was forming). They agree on the Big Bang, the formation of atoms to planetesimals to galaxies, how volcanic forces shaped the earth over billions of years, and the deposition of the fossil record over long ages as oceans slowly transgressed and regressed many times over the continents. They agree there was a local flood in the Middle East at some point in the last 10,000 years which was recorded in near eastern literature.

In other words, there is enormous agreement on all the primary events that happened during the 13.7 billion years of the history of the universe.

There are, nevertheless, variations within the Conventional view in terms of the *causes* of some events and the *appearance and development* of biological life. Within the Conventional view, there are three different approaches to these questions:

- **Progressive Creation** - God created complex marine and animal life in 20+ unique but progressive creation events every 20-30 million years, with numerous extinction events happening throughout the last 540 million years.
- **Theistic Evolution** - God created bacterial life that He guided over billions of years to evolve into all the life that has lived on this planet. Instead of unique creations, God used a form of descent from a common bacterial ancestor.
- **Atheistic Evolution** - After the spontaneous appearance of life, mutations and natural selection acted over billions of years to evolve into everything that has lived on this planet. Nothing is created, but everything alive today descended from a common bacterial ancestor.

We will try to note any distinctions under the Conventional view below. The point of this exercise is to try to reveal the differences between the two views in terms of the natural history of the world.

One criticism of the film argues it creates a false dichotomy by positing only two basic views of history. The fact that within the conventional view there is agreement concerning 96% of the events that occurred in the astronomical and geological history

of the world for the first 13.1 billion years, including much of biological life and extinction over the next .6 billion years, demonstrates there is really just one view of history with slight variations. Those variations in causality and biology occur only within 4% of their history of the world (the last 540 million years).

Questions for Comparison:

How long did it take for the earth to be formed and become what it is today?

Historical Genesis	Conventional
3 normal days of rapid transformation from a water ball to a livable biosphere.	4 billion years of slow development from accretion of planetesimals, to a molten ball, to a livable biosphere.

How long are the days in Genesis 1?

Historical Genesis	Conventional
A day is a normal rotation of the earth marked by mornings and evenings, just like we experience every day.	A “day” is a symbol that stands for varying periods of time lasting from hundreds of millions of years to billions of years; or, it is not meant to refer to normal time.

How long did it take for God to create the sun, moon, and stars?

Historical Genesis	Conventional
<p>1 day; on the fourth day God formed the universe, the sun, and the moon.</p>	<p>Over 10 billion years; about 4.5 billion years ago, our solar system slowly emerged out of a swirling cloud of gas and dust; first came the sun, then the earth, and finally the moon over hundreds of millions of years.</p>

How were plants and animals created?

Historical Genesis	Conventional
<p>God created all the unique kinds of plants and animals over 3 days, designing them to reproduce according to their particular kinds. (Plants on Day 3; Fish/ Birds on Day 5; Animals/ People on Day 6)</p>	<p><i>Progressive Creation</i> - God created unique plants and animals during 20+ progressive creation events over hundreds of millions of years. <i>Theistic/Atheistic Evolution</i> - God/random chance developed all living creatures from a common bacterial ancestor over billions of years; there are no unique creations of kinds.</p>

How and when were man and woman created?

Historical Genesis	Conventional
<p>God created man out of the dust, and woman out of man on the sixth day of creation.</p>	<p><i>Progressive Creation</i> - God uniquely created a man from the dust and a woman from man 50,000 to 200,000 years ago. <i>Theistic/Atheistic Evolution</i> - God/random chance developed a group of pre-human hominids and the first man and woman were either chosen out of this group, or are symbolic ideas for that group of hominids.</p>

Are the genealogies of Genesis useful for tracking the passage of time?

Historical Genesis	Conventional
<p>The genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 are accurate records of father-son relationships from Adam to Noah to Abraham and can be used to track time.</p>	<p>The genealogies represent a small percentage of the father-son- grandson line; up to 90% or more of the genealogical links are missing, so they cannot be used to track time. Some think the genealogies are symbolic.</p>

When did death enter the world?

Historical Genesis	Conventional
<p>Death entered the world as a result of Adam's disobedience, affecting both men and animals. At the same time, God cursed the creation with a "bondage to decay" (Romans 8). Prior to the Fall, there was no human or animal death, and the creation was "good."</p>	<p>Animal death existed for over 500 million years before Adam and Eve; this resulted in the death of billions of animals and the extinction of thousands of species. <i>Progressive Creation</i> - Human death was the result of the disobedience of Adam. <i>Theistic/Atheistic Evolution</i> - Human death occurred before the disobedience of Adam, and is actually an important aspect of evolutionary development by natural selection.</p>

Was the Flood global or local?

Historical Genesis	Conventional
<p>The Flood was a global catastrophe where the floodwaters covered the tops of the mountains existing at that time in history.</p>	<p>The Flood was a local/regional catastrophe somewhere in the Middle East; it did not affect the entire world.</p>

Did all the humans, birds and animals living on land die in the flood?

Historical Genesis	Conventional
Yes, all humans, birds, and land animals died during the Flood, with the exception of Noah, his family, and the animals on the Ark.	No one holds that all land animals and birds died. Some hold that all humans died, but not all animals and birds. Others hold that only humans, animals, and birds living in the region affected by the flood died.

Was there a major dispersion from the tower of Babel as a result of the confusion of languages by God?

Historical Genesis	Conventional
Yes, there was a real confusion of languages that led to a dispersion of people around the world.	Some hold that there was a real confusion of languages and a real dispersion. Others hold that this was a symbolic event and that human language evolved over tens of thousands of years.

Questions for discussion:

Are these views of history able to be reconciled with one another, or are they each telling a different story? Is there truly a conflict? What events in the conventional view don't fit with specific comments of Biblical authors?

- 1.** God declared the Creation to be “good” when He finished with each day. How does that fit with the idea of millions of years of death?
- 2.** In the fourth Commandment, God bases our normal week of six days of work and one day of rest on the seven days of the Creation week. Why does this comparison make it difficult to interpret the days as long ages or as symbols?
- 3.** Paul talks about a real Adam and Eve sinning. What does that mean for those who believe Adam and Eve are symbolic?
- 4.** Paul says that death came as a result of Adam's disobedience, and that the creation is in bondage to decay. How does that fit with the idea of death before Adam?
- 5.** Jesus compares His second coming with Noah's flood. How does a local flood change the meaning of Jesus' comparison?
- 6.** God promises to Noah never to flood the earth again in the same way. If the flood was a local flood, and local floods are still happening, what does that mean for God's promises?

7. Peter talks about the Creation and the destruction of the world by the flood as two things that people want to ignore or forget. Why is that?



The image shows two movie covers for 'Is Genesis History?'. The left cover is a DVD case with a black background and a view of Earth from space. The right cover is a Blu-ray case with a blue spine and the same Earth view. Both covers feature the title 'IS GENESIS HISTORY?' and the subtitle 'How did the world really come about?'.

Be Amazed at the Evidence for Creation

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5 | The Power of Alternate Histories of the Universe

What if President Roosevelt had been assassinated in 1933? Or Nazi Germany had won WWII? Or Japan had occupied the western half of the United States after the war?

All these events happen in Philip K. Dick's 1962 novel *The Man in the High Castle*. In his story, he develops two alternate histories of the world that run parallel to each other. In one history, the Allies win the war; in the other, the Axis win. A few years ago, Amazon started making it into a powerful new series.



Watching it is rather unsettling. The first time you see red swastikas in Times Square or Japanese flags in San Francisco, it gives you a strange, uneasy feeling. Everything familiar is somehow warped.

As the story develops, characters figure out there are parallel histories and begin to journey between them, eventually using one to influence the other. What happened in the past in one alternate history actually changes the future in the other.

Past Assumptions

Stories like this work because we all know that people, decisions, and events are consequential. Endless small decisions change the fabric of history; major events change the course of the world. What *The Man in the High Castle* reminds us of is that everything in the present precariously rests on what happened in the past. Change just a few things, and everything is different.

Yet it goes further than that. What it demonstrates is that if people *think* something happened in the past—even if it didn't—that assumption influences their choices. This is important to remember: how we view the past directly influences choices we make in the present, which in turn determines the future.

Such an assumption occurs at a key point in the story. An old newsreel of a nuclear explosion that happened in one history is brought into the alternate history. When people watch it, they assume it is a record of their own past and are convinced something happened *when it really didn't*. Their assumption about the past causes them to make a decision in the present (in this case, not to go to war) which affects the futures of billions of people.

It is the perfect example of the power of the past to change the future.



An Uneasy Feeling

This perspective can help us understand the importance of our view of Genesis.

Why are young Christians bothered when they hear an evolutionary history of the world? Why are young agnostics concerned when they hear evidence for the history recorded in Genesis? It is the influential weight of an alternate history bearing down upon them.

I pondered this in light of my own [discussion with my daughter](#) which led to the creation of our film *Is Genesis History?* I realized she had grown up being taught a Biblical history of the world. When she first heard the evolutionary history, she realized that it was an alternate history of the universe attempting to displace the Biblical history.

Evolutionists understand this, too. They believe that certain scientists have been able to reconstruct the

history of the natural world. They think the events in that history were primarily influenced by natural forces over billions of years. When they look at Genesis, however, they immediately know it is a history that, if true, completely displaces their history.

Young people intuitively understand these two histories are mutually exclusive.

This is because they each contain radically different timelines and events. There is no way to merge a less-than 10,000-years-old earth with a billions-of-years-old universe. There is no way to merge the instantaneous creation of Adam and Eve with the progressive evolution of thousands of hominids. There is no way to merge a perfect world without death with a world that includes millions of years of death.

This is why attempts at merging the two histories are ultimately unsuccessful and have limited adherents. ‘Old Earth Creation’ (the idea that God created life in successive but distinct creation events over billions of years) appeals primarily to intellectually-minded Christians who start with the Biblical text, then adjust parts of it to fit the conventional timeline. ‘Theistic Evolution’ (the idea that God used evolution to progressively create all life) appeals to those who start with the conventional evolutionary timeline, then make God the ultimate cause.

Both attempts ignore the power of historical logic. If certain things happened in the past, those things have inescapable consequences in the present. Most Christians who talk about accepting theistic evolution or old earth creation often mention the initial sense

of unease they felt as they tried to reconcile opposite histories. Only those with the intellectual ability to hold opposite points in tension can long maintain these views. Everyone else ends up landing on one side or the other.

As the history of the West reveals, most fell to the side of evolution. As the evolutionary history displaced the Biblical history, people began to believe evolution was the true history of the world.

The results were shocking.



The Power of Evolutionary History

One need not look far to see the consequences of Darwin's new history of the universe. Although there are countless ways evolutionary history transformed the world, here are three that push historical logic to its natural conclusions:

1. Eugenics - The eugenics movement officially began with the work of Charles Darwin's younger cousin, Francis Galton. Galton understood that if the evolutionary history of the world were true, then those groups that have the most offspring eventually take over a society. Since 'inferior' races such as africans, hispanics, and unfit whites had more children than the 'superior' white European race, the State should use birth control, sterilization, and abortion to limit the growth of these groups. Galton said, "what Nature does blindly, slowly, and ruthlessly, man may do providently, quickly, and kindly." Some kindness. The eugenics movement spread like a virus through Europe and the United States, influencing Margaret Sanger to found *Planned Parenthood* in 1916 and the US Congress to pass forced sterilization laws that sterilized tens of thousands of US citizens up through the 1950's. Even today, the eugenics movement can be seen in the worldwide abortion industry as it engineers the deaths of tens millions of children every year.

2. National Socialism - In the late nineteenth century, evolutionary thinking took hold in Germany through the work of Ernest Haeckel. Edward Larson writes in *Evolution* that Haeckel "provided scientific support for the particularly virulent racism that infected some strains of German thought during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, culminating in Nazi race theory." Hitler confirmed this himself in *Mein Kampf*, writing, "But little as Nature wishes a mating of weaker with stronger

individuals, still less does she want the fusion of a higher with a lower race, since otherwise the whole labor of selective evolution...would be set at naught." After all, if Nature had wiped out millions of lesser races in the past, why should the Nazis not do it in the present?

3. Marxist Communism - When Karl Marx first read *Origin of Species*, he wrote to fellow communist Friedrich Engels saying this was "the book which, in the field of natural history, provides the basis for our view." After all, if man is not made in God's image and does not have an eternal soul, then what does it matter if the State kills hundreds, or thousands, or millions of its own people as it seeks to realize the aims of communism? It is no coincidence that Lenin, Stalin, and Mao also happen to be the greatest mass murderers in history with over a hundred million deaths attributed to them.

These are just a few examples of what happened when people assumed the evolutionary history of the world was true. Such an assumption has led to the loss of faith of tens of millions of people, the destruction of hundreds of millions of lives, and the moral sickness of entire cultures. This assumption stands behind the current confusion in sexuality, with homosexuality seen by those who adopt evolutionary history as a natural result of sexual selection over millions of years.

What one thinks happened in the past is powerful indeed.



The Power of Biblical History

In contrast to this, there have been many men and women throughout history who understood the implications of the Bible providing the true history of the world. Here are just a few who assumed the Biblical history to be true, and acted on those assumptions:

- 1. Constantine**- As the first Christian emperor of Rome, Constantine rejected the pagan history of the universe and accepted the Biblical history, radically transforming the future of the world. He created an environment in which Christians could begin to publicly take care of the sick and poor through hospitals and hospices; he established freedom of religion; and he set the Roman empire on a course that would eventually end with the abolishment of abortion and pagan sexual practices under the reigns of future Christian emperors.

2. Isaac Newton- Most people don't know that the greatest scientist of all time was also fascinated with Biblical chronology. He saw the entire history of the universe as one that revealed the truth of God in nature. In fact, it was his recognition that "God created everything by number, weight and measure" that led him to postulate that the physical world could be predicated and understood through mathematical principles. All of modern science rests on the work of Christian men who believed the world was rational and understandable because a rational God had created it to be that way.

3. William Wilberforce - The man who oversaw the end of the slave trade in Britain was motivated by his understanding of God's actions in the past as recorded in the Bible. Where evolutionary history provided a justification for men destroying one another, Wilberforce instead said that, "Is it not the great end of religion, and, in particular, the glory of Christianity, to extinguish the malignant passions; to curb the violence, to control the appetites, and to smooth the asperities of man; to make us compassionate and kind, and forgiving one to another; to make us good husbands, good fathers, good friends; and to render us active and useful in the discharge of the relative social and civil duties?"

Again, these are only a few of the people who assumed the truth of Biblical history and acted upon it. There are many more who have transformed the world through their work as missionaries, doctors, politicians, teachers, and pastors. The contrast between these two histories is stark, and it grows even

more obvious when one studies the results over time. It is only when we accept the Biblical history of the universe that we can fulfill the purposes for which we were created.

What one thinks happened in the past is powerful indeed.



IS GENESIS HISTORY?
Bible Study

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6 | Why Time Matters to the Origins Debate

The idea for a documentary on Genesis came from a conversation I had with my then ten-year-old daughter.

She was watching a creation-evolution debate and was bothered by a number of things the evolutionist said. Her concern was that the events he described — a billions-of-years old earth, the direct relationship of men and animals, the impossibility of a global flood — were completely different from the events described in Genesis.

I knew how she felt. As a 15-year-old, I had been bothered by the same things. I recall reading books by Richard Leakey alongside books by Henry Morris. After weighing both sides of the question, I came away convinced that Genesis was an accurate book of history.

But that was over 30 years ago. I wondered if perhaps a documentary might be useful not only to my daughter, but to others interested in this topic. I started reading books and articles on creation and evolution. I tracked down a few scientists to ask them questions about it. Eventually, I found myself in front of them with a camera.



What I learned over the next few years changed my view of science, history, and the Bible. Here are three of the more important things I discovered:

1. Time & History are the Bedrock of Biblical Theology

I cut my theological teeth on the writings of Geerhardus Vos. What he taught me was that God formed real people and events in time to be the foundation of every aspect of Christian theology. God then recorded that history in the Bible. Starting with Creation and the Flood and going up to the Apostles, God progressively revealed Himself in the history of the world.

As Vos explains in *Biblical Theology*, “The process of revelation is not only concomitant with history, but it becomes incarnate in history. The facts of history themselves acquire a revealing significance.” Like acorns that grow into a forest of trees, the facts of history are necessarily connected to the theology that grows out of them.

We sometimes get caught up in our dedication to systematics and forget that every author of the New Testament builds his theology on the historical actions of God in time. Not ‘special, holy’ time, but normal, mundane time: the same days, weeks, months, and years we all experience.

The authors of the Bible make this abundantly clear. The creation happened over six days; the Flood started in Noah’s six hundredth year; Abraham was seventy-five when God called him; Moses spent 40 years in the desert; Isaiah saw the Lord in the year King Uzziah died; Jesus was in the tomb for three days.

All of Christian theology rests on its view of *time*.

That’s why a comment made by an old-earth creationist friend intrigued me. He said he began to understand Genesis 1 when he realized “it had nothing to do with time.” Curiously, he was referring to a text that uses the words ‘day,’ ‘evening,’ and ‘morning’ multiple times in sequence; God refers to the same text when He is quoted in Exodus 20:11 providing us the pattern for our normal week of work and rest.

To say Genesis 1 has nothing to do with time is a curious line of thought. Yet that is what some

Christians are doing today. They employ interpretive models in which events recorded in Scripture are cut free from actual history. The words may still be there, but any connection to normal, mundane time is gone.

As I began to study recent interpretations of Genesis by respected evangelical scholars, I noticed they all had one thing in common: they were de-historicizing and re-interpreting key sections of Genesis in order to make room for a completely different view of *time*. Clearly something very powerful and persuasive was influencing them.

What was that view of time that was seeking to replace the Biblical view?



2. The Primary Conflict is between Deep Time versus Biblical Time

In 1830, geologist Charles Lyell wrote a letter to a friend encouraging him to help “free science from

Moses.” At the time, there was a debate going on in England as to the source of the rock layers in the world. Did they form quickly as a result of flood waters, or over long periods of time as a result of slow, uniform processes?

Lyell and other thinkers rightly understood that Christian theology is rooted in time. If Enlightenment naturalism was to replace it, they had to construct an alternate timescale in which their new natural history could flourish.

That timescale was ‘deep time.’

This was an intentional move by brilliant men who had one thing in common: they rejected the possibility of divine revelation as a way to know what actually happened in time. Savants such as Comte de Buffon, Pierre LaPlace, and Jean-Baptist Lamarck were basically atheists; Georges Cuvier, James Hutton, and Charles Lyell were deists. Although some of them talked about “design,” they were not referring to the creative actions of the Trinitarian God at a certain point in time as recorded in Scripture.

The concept of deep time was also supported by Anglican broad churchmen like Adam Sedgwick, William Conybeare, and William Buckland who had adopted liberal interpretations of Genesis. From inside the church, they argued Genesis was not actual history. Together with the other savants, they established a new view of time under the auspices of the scientific thought of their day.

It was the age of rationalism, so scientific ideas self-consciously came before observation.

In *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle*, evolutionist Stephen J. Gould exposes the myth that men like Hutton and Lyell went to the data and then came back with deep time; rather, they started with the concept of long ages and looked for data that would fit their theories. We should therefore not be surprised that many of their scientific interpretations of the rocks have now been discarded—yet their view of time and history has remained.

After all, their view was designed to displace the biblical view of history. This is what has been missed by many in the origins debate: *it is not philosophical ideas or scientific data that are ultimate, but the historical framework.* Time influences everything else.

But isn't deep time proven beyond a doubt?

No, it cannot be proven because it is an historical assumption—a paradigm—that precedes the interpretation of data. No one can do an experiment on the past; one can only collect a limited number of observations then attempt to interpret them according to a paradigm.

Paradigms are found throughout every discipline of science. They are a necessary part of the scientific endeavor. When viewed as a whole, they form an interconnected network of assumptions pervading every field of science. Some are extremely particular to one field; others, like views of time, are essential to all the disciplines.

Although paradigms have been demonstrated by historians such as Thomas Kuhn to be enormously powerful, many scientists do not like to think they are being influenced by concepts that cannot be proven and that change with time. They realize that it calls into question their authority to speak with absolute certainty about the natural world.

Yet it is the history of science itself that demonstrates the transience of scientists' ideas about the world.

In just the last 250 years of geology, the catastrophism of Cuvier gave way to the uniformitarianism of Hutton and Lyell, which in turn gave way to the neo-catastrophism of Derek Ager et al. Geologists again look at rock layers and see evidence of major catastrophes. Yet previous generations would have scoffed at the idea of significant catastrophes used to explain layers — just like they scoffed at the idea that the earth had moving plates when, in 1859, it was suggested by a creationist, and again in the 1930's, it was suggested by an astronomer.

In fact, most of us who took Physical Science in middle school are unaware that the famous idea of plate tectonics was an idea rejected by mainstream geologists for decades until the late 1950's. Older geologists will talk about being in graduate school and remembering the paradigm shift from one view of geology to its exact opposite, all within a few years.

One notices the same thing in every area of science: astronomy, biology, genetics, etc. This is why philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn points out that “a

quite different concept of science...can emerge from the historical record of the research activity itself.”¹

In fact, when one digs into the history of science, all one sees is change – except in the commitment to deep time.

This is because deep time is the bedrock of the naturalistic view of the world. One need only glance at the events currently considered to be essential to the conventional view to realize it is a completely different timescale and history than the one presented in Genesis:

The conventional view says the universe formed slowly over 13.8 billion years; there was a galactic cooling event 4.5 billion years ago and the earth formed from the clumping together of planetesimals; after another billion years, single-cell creatures appeared, then complex creatures a few billion years later; death and extinction reigned for over 500 million years as a variety of living creatures appeared and disappeared all before the first humans showed up on the earth.

This puts Christians who hold to an old earth timescale in a curious situation. Because they have de-historicized six-day creation and re-interpreted the text referring to a global flood, they must turn to the conventional paradigm to explain what happened during 99.99% of the universe’s history. And 99.99% is essentially all of it.

1 Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 4th Ed.

Yet the primary architects of the conventional history built it to replace the record in Genesis. They do not think the facts of history have any revealing significance. They do not see any evidence of God speaking in history. There is no place for biblical theology. It is just 13.8 billion years of silence.

When old earth creationists therefore say God must be somewhere in those events that occurred over millions and billions of years, atheists and deists can simply ask, “Where? He certainly hasn’t revealed his actions during that time in any knowable way, and that’s the foundation of your biblical theology. You have rejected the only witness to history you have.”

That is why the first chapters of Genesis are so important. They form the foundation of how we know God in time; they are the bedrock of all our theology. They are absolutely necessary to understand what has happened in the past.

As Paul Nelson explains: “We have a witness to those events, and that witness is telling us this is what happened, and we have to take that into consideration when we evaluate the data.” Whether it is zoology, genetics, sedimentology, or cosmology, God’s witness to history must come first in guiding us toward an understanding of natural history.

This is what the scientists we interviewed in the film are doing. They are taking the historical witness recorded in Genesis and examining the natural world in light of it.



3. The Historical Record in Genesis Provides a Better Explanation of the World Around Us

After spending three years digging into the work done by these scientists, it is impressive to see how much it explains.

When you look at the complex interrelationships between the countless biological, geological, and physical systems in the world, all of which must simultaneously be in place to work, the creation of everything in six, literal days makes perfect sense.

When you look at the enormous layers of rock that stretch across huge sections of the continent, the lack of widespread, deep erosion between layers, the sudden appearance of complex fossils in the lowest layers, the repeating pattern of fossil footprints below hard parts, and the discovery of soft tissue in dinosaur bones, a global flood makes perfect sense.

When you look at the order in the physical universe, the fascinating design of animal kinds, the sudden emergence of language, the unique nature of humans, and the tendency of fallen man to think he can understand the world without needing to rely on revelation, the record in Genesis makes perfect sense.

It is when one sees all the evidence *together* that the powerful witness of Genesis grows in strength.

And yet many Christians are either unaware of the magnitude of the data, or have only been taught to view the world through the conventional paradigm of an old earth.

I think that is why many evangelical exegetes have sought out new interpretational approaches to address Genesis 1. The pressure of the conventional view is great, and in their hope of maintaining the historicity of other parts of the Bible, they feel compelled to de-historicize and re-interpret the narrative sections recorded in the first chapters of Genesis.

But that is simply unnecessary. When one adopts the historical paradigm provided by Genesis, it provides a much firmer foundation for correlating what we read in the Bible with what we understand about the world through science.

Ultimately, that is why we made a documentary. My hope is that it will provide a helpful perspective for both 10-year-olds *and* Biblical scholars.



Beyond
IS GENESIS HISTORY?

LEARN MORE

7 | How did Theistic Evolution Bring 3 Wheaton College Students to the Ark?

Most people don't realize how many professors at Christian colleges are theistic evolutionists.

I know I had no idea. That all changed when I was invited by a group of students to show *Is Genesis History?* at Wheaton College in November 2017. That experience led me to film three of them talking about these issues with Del Tackett at the Ark Encounter.

I had met the students at a creationist conference a few months earlier. They told me they had started a Creation Society on campus because almost all their professors were theistic evolutionists. They asked if I'd be willing to come to Wheaton and show the film. I said sure.



Wheaton College Photo Credit: Christoffer Lukas Müller

A few days before I arrived, I received an email from a student saying: “Some students are coming, but a LOT of faculty are coming. We met with our faculty advisor, and he said that some faculty are super angry that this event is even happening. They are hosting their own event Wednesday after Thanksgiving break to debunk the movie. They are also giving their students extra credit to go to BOTH events. Dr. Walton in Bible wrote a 5 page document and gave it to all the students ahead of time, to come doubting the very word history. Just a heads up. Thanks for coming.”

This was a bit unexpected. Most people assume students are the ones who get angry and protest events. But professors? Why were they angry at a creationist film being shown on a Christian campus by students? And why would they take time to write papers and plan responses to it?

Curiouser and curiouser.

He attached a copy of the document passed out to the students. It was written by Dr. John Walton, a senior Old Testament professor and scholar. I was familiar with Dr. Walton’s prior work on Genesis as well as his vocal support of theistic evolution through Biologos, an evolution advocacy group.

As I read his paper, I was amazed: here was a Bible professor at a renown Evangelical college arguing that Genesis could not be interpreted as an accurate record of historical events. Instead, “those seeking the truth of Genesis have no need to reconstruct events; they seek the message of the author.”

His arguments are reminiscent of the 19th-century liberal theologian Gerhard von Rad. They are disastrous to the historical-grammatical hermeneutic that serves as the foundation for a conservative interpretation of the Bible. Yet here they were being passed out to young students at a Christian college as the proper way to interpret Genesis. [Take a minute to read his paper](#): it is extremely troubling.

Clearly there was more going on at Wheaton than I was aware of.

Down the Rabbit Hole

A few days later, I arrived on campus with Dr. Todd Wood. (Todd was going to be leading the Q&A after the film.) We were met by an excited group of students who took us to dinner. They were primarily sophomores and juniors, extremely articulate and smart, but a bit nervous about what was going to happen: they hadn't expected their professors to react this way.

I asked them to tell me how the Creation Society started. They all said they were surprised to get to Wheaton and hear evolution being taught everywhere—including art classes. That was enough for one student, so he put up a note on a bulletin board asking if others wanted to form a group focusing on Biblical Creation. One joined, then another, then a lot more. By their first meeting, they had 70 students on their email list.

They then needed a faculty advisor. One of the girls said they didn't have a lot of options since only two out of the 200 professors on campus were Creationists.

I looked at Todd in surprise but he just shrugged: he said it was that way at a lot of Christian colleges; most people just weren't aware of it.

The students had reserved the largest room in the science building. By the time we began, nearly every seat was filled. The students opened with a devotional, showed the film, then we sat down in front for the Q&A.

It was all quite cordial. As we got close to the end, I could see relief growing on the students' faces. Clearly, this wasn't going to turn into a heated debate; and they weren't going to get in trouble with their professors. Afterward, we went and got ice cream.



Some of Creation Society members with us after the showing.

They were energized by the film and even more so by the conversations with Todd Wood. Todd is great with students and interacts with them regularly through CORE Academy. They all had lots of basic questions about looking at the world in light of Genesis; it was obvious this was not the perspective being taught in their classes.

Right before I left, I was asked if I would consider coming back to hear the response from the professors. Their student advisor couldn't attend, and they were concerned about defending their position. I again said sure.

Listening to the Profs

Two weeks later, I found myself back in the same classroom. This time, five professors were in front: two geologists, one astronomer, one marine biologist, and Dr. Walton himself. They asked for questions from students and the discussion started.

I sat to one side and listened. The first question set the tone for the entire evening. A student asked about the flat strata in the Grand Canyon, and Dr. Steve Moshier, a geologist, answered. He said he agreed with Steve Austin's description of Grand Canyon strata, but disagreed with his conclusions about how it formed. He said he had a lot of respect for Steve's work and thought he was a good geologist. They were actually old acquaintances.

I could feel a sense of ease come over the room. This was going to be collegial.

For the next hour and a half questions went back and forth: what about original sin and evolution? How should we interpret Genesis? Are Neanderthals human? What about the rock record? Since it was a Q&A, a lot of topics simply did not come up. Most of the students did not have the critical knowledge to dig deep into the subjects.

When it was over, I introduced myself to the professors. They had a slightly strange look come over them when they realized I was the producer and director of the film. But they were kind and welcoming. Any prior concerns or frustrations were kept quiet.

An Invitation to the Ark

Afterward, I again went to get ice cream, this time with just three students.

We talked about what had been said and what they thought about it. As I listened to them articulate their views, I was impressed with their honesty and candor: they were holding onto the creationist perspective in spite of a lot of pressure in the other direction.

When I asked them why they held to Biblical creation, they each said the same thing: there could be no animal or human death before Adam. As one girl explained, “If Jesus came to destroy death, and death is the great enemy, then how could a good God use millions of years of death to evolve animals and people? It doesn’t make sense.”

They talked about evolution impugning God’s goodness, how it creates problems with the new

creation, and many more things. I realized I needed to get them on film.

Here was a group of young college students who had read God's Word and were tenaciously holding onto it in spite of what their professors were trying to teach them about the history of the world and the Bible. They were an impressive bunch.

I asked them if they'd be willing to be a part of our short film with Del Tackett at the Ark Encounter. I already knew I would be filming a new segment for our Anniversary showing on February 22, but I didn't know who I was going to include in it. Providentially, God had brought me back to the exact people I needed.

Two months later, they were in front of the cameras with Del Tackett at the Ark. It is a good reminder that God always raises up a new generation of men and women to affirm and defend the historicity of Genesis.

You can watch the interview with the students on the DVD or Blu-ray of Is Genesis History? as well as on our website.



8 | The Gnostic World of John Walton

The history of the church includes well-meaning scholars who introduce ideas that undermine Biblical authority. This is the case with the gifted Old Testament professor Dr. John Walton.

Dr. Walton teaches at Wheaton College. Last November, in preparation for a campus showing of our film *Is Genesis History?*, he provided a paper for professors to pass out to students. Entitled “Is Genesis Real History?,” it outlined his unique perspective on how to interpret the book of Genesis. (You can [read it here.](#))

A number of students were troubled by what they read. Dr. Walton seemed to be questioning whether the Bible could be used to know what actually happened in the past. His ideas were complex, however, and some students were not sure what to make of them.

One student asked if I would respond. Although there are a number of observations I can make, his paper should first be placed in context of his prior work and affiliations.

Finding a Lost World

In 2009, Dr. Walton published a slim volume entitled *The Lost World of Genesis One*. In it he argued that to understand the Bible, one needed to understand the ancient cultural environment in which it was written. One must therefore immerse oneself in the non-

Israelite literature written during that period. Using this new knowledge, one could recover the “lost world” of the ancients and properly interpret the Bible.



Tablet V - Epic of Gilgamesh

Although conservative scholars agreed that understanding ancient culture is important, there was strong disagreement with his analysis and conclusions.²

For example, Dr. Walton asserted that ancient Near Eastern people focused more on how things *functioned* than their *material* nature. This meant that when Genesis 1 describes God forming land, sea, and animals

2 Specifically Vern Poythress, Noel Weeks, Richard Averbeck, John Currid, Steve Boyd, et al.

over a series of days, it is not referring to material substances like dirt, water, and flesh appearing at specific times and places. Rather, it reveals the function of these things within the ‘cosmic temple’ of the world.

This unusual construction enabled Dr. Walton to conclude that Genesis 1 “was never intended to be an account of material origins. Rather it was intended as an account of functional origins.... If the Bible does not offer an account of material origins, we are free to consider contemporary origins on their own merits, as long as God is seen as ultimately responsible.”³

The Usefulness of a Lost World

Theistic evolutionists quickly recognized the usefulness of this new interpretation. They desired to merge evolutionary history with the Bible, but had always struggled with the traditional interpretation of Genesis: immediate creation in six normal days is the opposite of progressive development over billions of years.

Dr. Walton’s interpretation was the perfect solution. It acted like a hermeneutical blade separating the events of Genesis 1 from actual time, thereby enabling evolutionary events to take their place.

This is why Francis Collins, founder of theistic evolution advocacy group Biologos, is quoted on the book’s front cover saying it is “a profoundly

3 John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One* (IVP Academic, 2009) 131.

important new analysis of the meaning of Genesis.” Not surprisingly, Dr. Walton is a member of the Biologos Advisory Council.

The mission of Biologos is to convince the global evangelical church to adopt theistic evolution. As they say on their website: “BioLogos invites the church and the world to see the harmony between science and biblical faith as we present an evolutionary understanding of God’s creation.”

Dr. Walton’s work therefore plays a key part in their strategy. They understand that to change the church, they must first change its understanding of Genesis. In 2013, Biologos funded a seven month world tour for Dr. Walton to speak in dozens of seminaries and universities in the United States and 15 other countries.

Since then, Dr. Walton has continued to apply his ‘lost world’ methodology to other parts of the Bible. In additional books, he redefines the nature of Biblical revelation, that Adam and Eve were ‘archetypes’ instead of the first biological humans, and that the Genesis flood was an unidentifiable local event hyperbolically described as a global catastrophe.⁴

How does an evangelical Bible scholar end up advancing such heterodox ideas?

4 Respectively in *The Lost World of Scripture* (IVP Academic, 2013), *The Lost World of Adam and Eve* (IVP Academic, 2015), and *The Lost World of the Flood* (IVP Academic, 2018).

It is here that Dr. Walton's Wheaton paper provides unique insight into his thinking. What it reveals is that he has adopted a gnostic view of the ancient world that enables him to reinterpret key sections of Scripture.

Entering a Gnostic World

Dr. Walton reminds me of the third-century theologian Origen to whom he sometimes refers. Origen had one of the most creative theological minds in the early church. Nevertheless, his creativity led him to advocate views that were rejected as dangerous to Christian theology.

That is what students sensed when they read Dr. Walton's paper. There is a dangerous feel to statements such as:

- “No such thing as a historian existed in the ancient world.”
- “Genesis is better understood as narrative rather than as a record of historical events.”
- “When we accept the truth of such narratives we are accepting the metaphysical affirmations, which transcend the empirical.”
- “It is impossible to forensically reconstruct events using the information that the Bible provides.”
- “When we attempt to frame narratives in historical terms we potentially diminish their truth and limit the nature of their reality.”
- “Genesis narratives are interested in a deep reality that transcends events and history. Their

significance is found not in their historicity but in their theology; not in *what* happened, or even in asserting that something *did* happen, but in *why* it happened.”

These statements reveal a modern form of gnosticism.

By ‘gnosticism,’ I’m referring to a philosophical view of the world that thinks special, hidden knowledge is necessary to understand what is true. For Dr. Walton, this knowledge is found in his ‘lost world’; it can only be recovered by scholars like himself. Such knowledge provides true insight into reality.



Gilgamesh and Winged Bull of Khorsabad, Louvre.

Reality is thus split into two levels: what seems to be real versus “a deep reality that transcends events and history.” Those who do not accept Dr. Walton’s knowledge as he presents it are dismissed as lacking true understanding: they are misdirected, they use improper categories, they ask the wrong questions.

When one accepts his knowledge, however, it reveals divisions between categories previously assumed to be connected: faith and reality, function and material nature, language and event, theology and history.

Misunderstandings about these things have persisted for centuries in the church due to lack of knowledge. Now that this special knowledge is available, the church can begin to know the truth.

Yet that truth is not captured by a series of propositional statements describing past events (such as the Apostles’ Creed). Rather, it is movement on a pathway measured by one’s acceptance or rejection of this special knowledge.

As one accepts this knowledge, one is able to move past tensions assumed to exist between competing views of origins and history. Instead, when one realizes the Biblical text is describing ‘theological history’ rather than actual history, one is free to accept evolution as the true history of the universe.

According to Dr. Walton, Biblical truth is not dependent on real history. Instead, “truth is found in the narrator’s interpretation, which we accept by faith, regardless of whether or not we can reconstruct the

events. His interests are not concentrated on human history but on God's plans and purposes."

This is the goal of gnostic thinking: the separation of human history from God's plans and purposes.

In the first centuries, gnosticism said truth was found in knowing that God could not have entered time as a sweating, laughing, bleeding man. In these latter centuries, gnosticism says truth is found in knowing God could not have created dirt, water, and life in a few days, or formed two people immediately from dust and a rib, or destroyed the earth with a global flood during the 600th year of Noah's life.

Gnosticism consistently seeks to substitute Biblical history with its own history. In the early church, it looked to the religions of Persia and the philosophies of Greece to provide a spiritual history of the world. In the modern era, it looks to the religion of evolutionary science and the philosophies of the Enlightenment to create a materialist history of the universe.

At its heart, however, gnosticism is at war with God's real actions in *history*.

It is a heresy that stands in opposition to the Biblical view that teaches a direct connection between God's original acts of creation and His absolute control of every event in time. This control includes accurate communication through His prophets about real events which He brings to pass. As Isaiah tells us:

"Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: 'I am the Lord, who made all things,

who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, who frustrates the signs of liars and makes fools of diviners, who turns wise men back and makes their knowledge foolish, who confirms the word of his servant and fulfills the counsel of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited,' and of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be built, and I will raise up their ruins.'" (Isaiah 44:24-26)

According to Isaiah, there is no essential division between function and matter, language and event, theology and history. One need only read Isaiah 40-48 to see that God forms real materials for specific functions. He explains His words and deeds in space and time through His servants the prophets. He directly connects theology to His actions in history.



Isaiah, Sistine Chapel

Dr. Nicholas Perrin, a professor of Biblical studies at Wheaton who specializes in gnosticism in the early church, explains this essential connection between God and history:

“God made history and history matters. Apart from the conviction that our faith is a historical faith, we are left only to cast about. But, when we are fully persuaded that sacred history meshes with the history in which we live and move and have our being, that is when biblical faith becomes a real possibility.... The heart-and-mind value of reconnecting the biblical world with the ‘real world’ can hardly be overstated. Somehow in our confused modern-day thinking, we have managed to put asunder what God has joined together.”⁵

Responding to a Gnostic World

Gnostic thinking always seems confusing. This is because it attempts to reorient essential structures in the creation order. Irenaeus observed this in the second century and knew the best way to reveal gnostic errors was to compare them to the Biblical text and to creation itself.

In light of that, here are three assertions we can make in response to Dr. Walton:

5 Andrew E. Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul: A Biblical Chronology* (Concordia Publishing House, 2011) xxiv.

1. God designed the world so that people can know the past through language.

The doctrine of creation teaches that God made the physical world using language. He then formed man in His image and gave him the ability to use words to know the world. This includes man's capacity to record past events and accurately communicate them to others.

Our basic sense of 'history' as a record of past events (whether oral or written, simple or complex) is a result of being made in God's image. It is a trait we share with all people who have ever lived.

When we read in the year 2018 AD something that was written in 1440 BC, we instantly cross great distances of time and space. Even when languages and cultures are different, we have the unique ability to effectively translate meaning between them.

After all, God always intended history to be translated across culture and time. Jesus spoke one language, but the gospels were written in another. When Peter preached the first sermon, it was immediately translated into a dozen languages. The Bible itself is a collection of ancient Near Eastern documents written in three different languages over 1500 years by dozens of men from diverse cultures talking about real events in time. It is clear testimony to God's overwhelming intent to communicate history through language.



Saint Matthew, Ebbo Gospels, Hautvillers, France

In spite of this, Dr. Walton asserts our modern concept of ‘history’ cannot be applied to the ancient world.

He invokes his special knowledge to say that “no such thing as a historian existed in the ancient world” and “that which is important about events in the ancient world is not empirical in nature. They are more interested in what the observer could *not* see. That is, they are more inclined to use a metaphysical lens for reality, rather than an empirical one as we do.... The ancient world as a whole had a different way of knowing than we do.”

It is important to Dr. Walton’s gnostic interpretation that he separate our way of thinking about the past—

even the way we know—from that of the ancient world. After all, if our normal sense of ‘history’ and ‘knowing’ does not apply to the ancients, how can we be sure what actually happened? According to Dr. Walton, we cannot.

This is a radically different worldview than that taught by Biblical authors who lived and wrote in the ancient world. They repeatedly say past events are knowable and communicable to future generations through language.

After the first Passover, Moses told the people to “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the Lord brought you out from this place...You shall tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’”(Ex. 13:3,8) And later, as they journeyed toward Canaan, “Moses wrote down their starting places, stage by stage, by command of the Lord...” (Num 33:2)

Not only Moses, but Joshua, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all understood the concept of history and were fully aware of what they were doing: recording real events so future generations would know they actually happened.

In fact, we who live in the Western world received our unique approach to history *from the Hebrews*. This is recognized by scholars everywhere. As even liberal theologian Thorlief Boman writes, “put succinctly, it

can be said that the Israelites gave the world historical religion.”⁶

Dr. Walton’s claim to special knowledge about the ancient world breaks down when considering the Bible. Yet it also breaks down when considering non-Israelite ancient Near Eastern texts. There are two things to consider here:

First, most people are unaware that the vast majority of ancient texts are administrative documents such as contracts, laws, bills of sale, marriages, inventories, treaties, receipts, and agreements.⁷ They present a series of ancient cultures interested in dates, amounts, weights, measurements, costs, borders, names, and numerical accuracy. It is a world that used language in a recognizable, empirical way.

6 Thorlief Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (W.W. Norton & Co, 1960) 11.

7 Marc Van De Mieroop, *Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History* (Routledge, 1999), 12.



Cuneiform tablet documenting flour deliveries for rent payment, Ebabbar archive, MET.

All sorts of basic assumptions about time, space, and language are embedded in economics, politics, and law. A contract records an agreement transacted *in the past*, a receipt records an item sold *in the past*, a deed records a piece of land bought *in the past*. They witness to an essential connection between language and history.

Second, in contrast to the abundance of administrative documents, only a fraction of non-Israelite literary texts exist with which Dr. Walton can draw his particular conclusions. For instance, he mentions monumental royal inscriptions created for pagan kings as a context for understanding Genesis. This is a curious comparison.

Dr. Noel Weeks, former Senior Lecturer of Ancient History at the University of Sydney, examined Dr. Walton's methods and use of ancient Near Eastern texts, stating: "In summary I am not impressed by the whole approach.... There is no recognition of the difficulty of discerning a uniform mind of the ANE. Individual extra-biblical texts are turned into representations of the whole huge chronological and cultural span. Even more striking are claims that are simply false."⁸

Dr. Richard Averbeck, professor of Old Testament and Semitic languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, puts it succinctly: "The point is that material creation was of great concern in the ANE as well as in ancient Israel."⁹

In sum, Dr. Walton's gnostic bifurcation of modern and ancient ways of knowing is the opposite of the Biblical witness and the creation order. Both demonstrate that all people were made in God's image in order to communicate events to others through language across time.

After all, it is through historical events that God reveals Himself to man. This leads us to our second assertion.

8 Noel Weeks, "The Bible and the 'Universal' Ancient World: A Critique of John Walton," *Westminster Theological Journal*, 78 (2016), 26.

9 Richard E. Averbeck, "The Lost World of Adam and Eve: A Review Essay," *Themelios* 40.2 (2015), 235.

2. Biblical narratives are authoritative because God ensured they were an accurate record of His words and actions in time.

The doctrine of revelation teaches that God reveals Himself both through the creation and through language. The former is 'general revelation' and states that people from all times and cultures can look at the natural world and perceive God's power and nature. (Romans 1:19) The latter is 'special revelation' and states that God has spoken at different times and ways through His prophets, His apostles, and His Son. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Throughout the history of Israel, however, false prophets said they were speaking for God. How could one know they were false? Moses provided a simple test: if a prophet spoke in the name of the Lord, but the events he predicted did not happen, he was to be ignored. (Deut. 18:22)



Elijah and the Prophets of Baal, Lucas Cranach the Younger.

This test reveals the essential connection between God's words and history. Since only God controls time and space, only His prophets could consistently predict events in His name. As God explains in Isaiah 42:9: *“Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”*

Accurate verbal reflection of events (past, present, and future) was the basic mark of God's prophet. But that reflection also included the prophet's interpretation of events so that those living at the time—as well as their descendants—could understand the theological purpose of those events.

God's discussion with Abraham in Genesis 18 is an example of this. God and the angels spent many hours with Abraham waiting for a meal to be cooked then eating it together. They would naturally have talked about numerous things. Yet only two are included in the historical narrative: the promise concerning Isaac and the interchange about destroying Sodom and Gomorrah.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, therefore, prophets writing about the past were led to select certain events, ignore others, emphasize specific actions, and even adjust chronological order to highlight particular points. This control of historical material is what everyone does in some capacity when talking about the past: communication is always selection, emphasis, order. Yet this in no way minimizes the potential accuracy of words to represent events.

In the case of Abraham, the prophet links God's words to God's actions in history: *"Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven."* (Gen. 19:24) and *"The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as he had promised."* (Gen. 21:1) The truth of the narrative rests on whether there was actually a burning city or a crying baby boy.

In spite of this, Dr. Walton projects a gnostic interpretation onto the Bible when he asserts "the truth or falsity of the narratives has less to do with the accuracy with which they describe the events of the past (often not able to be assessed since we have no independent witness), and more to do with the accuracy with which they describe the state of the present..... Authority is vested in the interpretation of the narrator, not in the event or in our ability to reconstruct or verify the event."

It is this line of thinking that enables Dr. Walton to conclude Genesis 1 is not about real creation in normal time, that Genesis 2 is not about the first two biological humans, and that Genesis 6-8 is not about a real global flood.

Yet why stop there? There is no exegetical distinction between Noah's children and Abraham - they are listed in the same genealogy in Genesis 11. And what of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph? Dr. Walton's blade must cut at the historical roots of all the narratives in Genesis, removing the authority from the event itself and placing it in the interpretation of the author who, apparently, is more interested in the present than the past.

Yet this is the opposite of the Biblical view of authority. As V. Philips Long observes, “divine revelation should be located in both historical events and the interpretive word that mediates those events to us. It also seems to be the approach that is most in keeping with the biblical witness itself.”¹⁰

But Dr. Walton’s gnostic interpretation of the Bible inserts a gulf between events and the interpretation of those events. He must do this, however, to replace Biblical revelation concerning origins with the contemporary evolutionary history. Authority is therefore taken out of the event and placed only in the interpretation. If events such as the creation of animals or the flood actually happened as the narratives describe them, an evolutionary history of the world is impossible.

Dr. Walton may deny this sort of historical substitution is his intent, but the structure of his books, the repetitive comments within them, and his professional associations tell a different story. He has published an extensive corpus of material that provides clear insight into his views. As Jesus reminds us, “You will know them by their fruits.” (Matt 7:16)

This, of course, is how we know anyone: by their words and deeds in time. It is the same way God reveals Himself to us.

Ezekiel explains the basic link between God and history when he says: “Thus says the Lord God: ‘None of my words will be delayed any longer, but the word that I

10 V. Philips Long, *The Art of Biblical History* (Zondervan 1994) 105-106.

speaking will be performed, declares the Lord God.” (Ezek. 12:28) “And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.” (Ezek 37:13-14)

What Ezekiel reminds us is that God structures events in order to embed true theology within human history. This leads to our third point.

3. God embedded theology within the fabric of human history according to His plans and purposes.

The doctrine of providence teaches that God orders all events in history to conform to His divine intentions. As Isaiah explains: *“Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and the one who formed him: ‘Ask me of things to come; will you command me concerning my children and the work of my hands? I made the earth and created man on it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host. I have stirred him up in righteousness, and I will make all his ways level; he shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward,’ says the Lord of hosts.” (Isa. 45:11-13)*

God declares that because He created the earth and put man on it, the Israelites can be sure He will raise up a unique man to save them. This is the God who *“kills and brings to life,”* who *“makes poor and makes rich,”* who *“brings low and he exalts.”* (1 Sam 2:6-7) He is the God who molds human history just as the potter

molds clay, shaping it both to reveal His redemption and to be His redemption.

As Geerhardus Vos explains, “in not a few cases revelation is *identified* with history. Besides making use of words, God has also employed acts to reveal great principles of truth.... In these cases the history itself forms a part of revelation. There is a self-disclosure of God in such acts. They would speak even if left to speak for themselves.”¹¹



Samson Puts Down the Pillars, Tissot

This is what we see throughout the New Testament. Jesus and the apostles rely on the *structure* of Biblical history to provide their theology.

11 Geerhardus Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (P&R 1990) 9.

Consider Jesus's reply to the Pharisees about divorce: "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matt 19:4-6)

Jesus first establishes the authority of the written text as a witness to a real event: "Have you not read..." He then builds His case against divorce on the structure of what happened in time: *from the beginning*, God created them male and female and intended them to be joined in marriage; as a result, men and women today should remain joined in marriage. Jesus's entire argument hinges on the reality of Adam and Eve being the first two humans married by God in the garden.

Jesus's theology is consistently connected to history.

In spite of this, Dr. Walton creates a gnostic separation between real history and theology. As he states: "Reconstructing the event is not the pathway to truth because the target truth is not inherent in the event but in the interpretation of the event. Genesis narratives are interested in a deep reality that transcends events and history. Their significance is found not in their historicity but in their theology; not in *what* happened, or even in asserting that something *did* happen, but in *why* it happened."

Dr. Walton introduces a false tension between history and theology in order to disconnect real events

from their historical-theological implications. This separation between history and theology enables him to replace the Biblical history of the world with a materialist evolutionary history. In redefining man's history, however, he must inevitably redefine the theology connected to it.

Consider the results of Dr. Walton's gnosticism if applied to some basic Christian doctrines:

- How must we redefine *special revelation* if the words of the Bible do not accurately reflect real events?
- How must we redefine *God's goodness, wisdom, and power* if He used millions of years of evolution and death to 'create' animals and men?
- How must we redefine the *fall* if universal corruption and death existed before Adam?
- How must we redefine *original sin* if Adam and Eve were not the first biological humans?
- How must we redefine *universal judgment* if the Flood did not actually destroy all humans and animals on the earth?
- How must we redefine *redemption* if Jesus did not come to save us from the effects of Adam's real sin?
- How must we redefine the *authority of scripture* if the authors of the New Testament base their theology on a presumed historicity of past events?

These are dangerous questions to be asking. Yet they are the logical consequence to Dr. Walton's method.

One cannot substitute one history for another without also changing the theology connected to it.

Final Thoughts

The result of accepting Dr. Walton's gnostic worldview is the slow destruction of the historical foundation upon which Christianity is based. Although he believes he is providing a solution to the origins debate by disconnecting the Biblical text from real history, he is simply falling into the errors that have beset gnosticism since the first century.

Yet Dr. Walton is a professor at one of the most respected evangelical colleges in the world. Such a position gives him remarkable credibility to spread his "new analysis of the meaning of Genesis" to Christians everywhere. As a result, some will be swayed by his methods to adopt his modern form of gnosticism.

That is concerning indeed.



A Postscript on Philosophical Influences

One of my assumptions about creative thinkers is that they try to answer their own questions through their work. You can see it with novelists and filmmakers as well as philosophers and theologians.

I suspect something similar is going on with Dr. Walton. He clearly is a brilliant man and an exceptionally creative thinker. He has developed a unique interpretive structure to solve a particular problem, one he brings up over and over again in his

books: the “perceived origins conflict between the Bible and science...”¹²

The goal of his work seems to be to solve that difficult problem.

It is an old problem. Pulitzer-prize winning historian of science Edward Larson opens his series of lectures *The Theory of Evolution: History of a Controversy* observing that at the start of the 19th century, Genesis 1 was interpreted as God having created all animals and people according to their kinds in just a few days. This is opposite to the view that all animals and people were progressively formed by natural selection and common descent over millions of years. This is the essence of the controversy.

The key problem for Christians has been how to reconcile a religion that clearly is based on historical events (the Crucifixion and Resurrection, the giving of the Law, Noah’s Flood, Adam) with an evolutionary history of the world.

To put it bluntly, how can one affirm evolution and still keep Christianity?

This is the problem faced by Dr. Walton. While his basic solution is to divide the functional and material (as outlined above), he offers an intriguing philosophical rationale for doing so in “Proposition 13” of *The Lost World of Genesis One*. He states: “The

12 *Lost World of Genesis One*, 113.

difference between origin accounts in science and scripture is metaphysical in nature.”¹³

This is a revealing statement. In proposing it, he is borrowing a distinction from modern critical philosophy which sees an essential division between the ‘physical’ and the ‘metaphysical.’ He therefore places science and contemporary origin accounts into the physical realm, while God’s activity and ancient origin accounts are placed in the metaphysical.

According to Dr. Walton, reality can be seen as “a layer cake. In this view, the realm of scientific investigation would be represented in the lower layer.... In contrast, the top layer represents the work of God.”¹⁴ He says that, “Science, by current definition, cannot explore the top layer” which “concerns the realm of theology, or more broadly, metaphysics, and is not the stuff of empirical science.... Genesis is a top-layer account—it is not interested in communicating the mechanisms...”¹⁵

By placing the two origins accounts in two different layers of reality, he thereby removes the conflict. This is why he can say it is “perceived”; to him, it is not an actual conflict because each describes a different, non-intersecting layer of reality.

This appears to be the philosophical influence behind Dr. Walton’s gnosticism. He takes this modern

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 114

15 Ibid., 114, 115

philosophical distinction and, consciously or not, projects it *back* onto the worldview of the ancients.

In reading his explanation for ‘Proposition 13,’ I kept feeling as if I had seen this approach to structuring the world before and that there was a well-known problem with it. It wasn’t until a friend better schooled in philosophy observed its similarities to neo-Kantian thought that it hit me: Dr. Walton was employing Kantian critical philosophy to separate the world into two essentially different realms that have *no identifiable connection*.

Francis Schaeffer saw this type of division as the root problem of modern thinking. He traced its source back to ancient neo-Platonism and used similar language to describe the separation: by dividing the world into an ‘upper-story’ and ‘lower-story,’ one removes God’s actions from the real world. Theology and faith operate in the upper-story while science and reality operate in the lower.

But if this is accurate, how do the two layers connect? That is the new dilemma. Schaeffer, of course, denied this separation was real; Dr. Walton, however, has made it the cornerstone of his methodology.

As a result, he takes pains to say that physical mechanisms “were decreed by the word of God,” yet he never identifies *how* the divine world of metaphysical theology actually intersects with the real world of physical science. Where do God’s actions actually intersect evolution? How does a metaphysical God work in the physical world? What can we truly know

He has done if we only have human interpretations of past events?

Dr. Walton's adoption of a modern philosophical distinction to solve one problem ends up creating countless others.

Interestingly, Dr. Walton invokes this philosophical distinction for reasons similar to that of Immanuel Kant: both sought to establish a solid footing for scientific knowledge. Whereas Kant, however, did not believe in God, Dr. Walton surely does. Yet he has adopted a philosophical blade fashioned by Kant that is dangerous for Christians to wield.

The problem goes back to their view of 'science' and 'knowledge.'

What both Kant and Dr. Walton are mistaken about is that science is somehow epistemologically ultimate. It is no coincidence that *Scientia* is the Latin word for *knowledge*. (Just as *gnosis* is the Greek.) What makes science *seem* to offer absolute certainty is that it seeks to understand something that *actually* is epistemologically ultimate: God's creation. Science, however, is man-made, and therefore has all of man's failings and natural limitations associated with it.

This was what Thomas Kuhn realized: when one studies the history of science, one realizes that man's scientific ideas are not epistemologically certain. 'Science' is a patchwork quilt of pieces and layers that over time are slowly replaced by new ones as men and women seek to create 'maps' of a highly complex world.

The process of mapping the physical world actually requires metaphysical skills like rational thinking, mathematics, language, analysis, etc. But how do these intellectual maps connect to the real world?

Non-Christians have no real explanation. One need only read Eugene Wigners' "[The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences](#)" to realize that the problem remains unsolved; most scientists just ignore it and go back to doing normal science.

The solution is only found in the Christian worldview. To accept it, however, means the rejection of the neo-Kantian view of reality. It also means the rejection of Dr. Walton's division of physical and metaphysical as he defines them.

Instead, when one accepts what the Bible reveals about the world, it explains why people can create useful scientific maps (as limited and fallible as they are), and why we can actually know true things about the past.

The solution is seen in the writings of an old man who saw the dangers gnosticism posed to the church. As only someone led by the Holy Spirit could do, he showed how God's divine metaphysical action led to the physical creation recorded in Genesis 1, and how the God-man Jesus Christ was essentially connected to both:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him,

and without him was not any thing made that was made.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1-3,14)

Instead of absolute separation, there is a dynamic connection between God and His creation. God is both transcendent *and* immanent, and His actions can be known in the real world.

Although a great mystery, Christ is the solution to all of this, as the Creed of Chalcedon states: He is “in two natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably.”

The reason math works, or we can do science, or we can use language, or we can know the past, is because a metaphysical/physical God made a metaphysical/physical world and put a metaphysical/physical man in it to rule over it, thereby ensuring everything was perfectly interrelated. The metaphysical and physical are different, but connected. As the apostle John observes, there is a real, historical interaction between the two that was designed by God in the beginning and continues to the present.

When man sinned, however, he confused this relationship. We see it when Adam and Eve thought they could cover their physical bodies to hide their spiritual shame. As a result, man began to worship the physical world itself, somehow thinking he could use it to control the metaphysical. Isaiah satirizes this worldview and shows how it always leads to a lie. (Isaiah 44:9-20).

To solve the problem, God entered the world and became a Man Himself. This demonstrated for all eternity the essential connection between the two realms—as well as His ultimate control over all of history and His right alone to be worshipped.

God then ensured His actions would be written down for all to accurately know. This is what John tells us at the end of his gospel: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”(John 20:30-31)

Language is what God always uses to reveal His metaphysical/physical interaction to save real people in the space-time world. This is the reason why anyone who looks at the Bible as a whole must also accept that Genesis is an accurate reflection of God’s acts in time. Whether creating everything in six normal days, forming Adam and Eve as the first biological humans, or flooding the entire world, He has always used accurate language to record His actions so *that we could know Him*.

This is true knowledge.

And so, although I respect Dr. Walton’s brilliance and creativity, his proposed solution to the question of origins only leads to a more serious set of problems. His philosophical approach is a dangerous way of looking at the world.

Is Science an Ultimate Authority?

Sometimes it's helpful to look at the history of science and Biblical interpretation at the same time.



Charles Lyell, Geologist

In 19th-century England, new views presented by geologists and paleontologists convinced some Bible scholars and pastors to begin interpreting Genesis according to an old earth, and (in some cases) a local flood. At the time, those geologists pointed to the situation with Galileo and the Church in the 16th-century, saying the situation with geology and the age of the earth was the same. No one should use the Bible to influence science. (I have heard the same argument made today.)

There is, of course, an important difference. Galileo was talking about something happening in the present

8 | that could be observed (the rotation of the earth around the sun); the geologists and paleontologists in England were talking about something that happened in the past that could not be observed. Unlike Galileo, these early scientists were looking at the rock layers and the fossils, then interpreting them according to new assumptions about the way the earth developed and its consequent age.

This is why geology and paleontology are considered *historical sciences*. They are seeking to explain events that are not now happening. But, like all areas of science, they rely on numerous assumptions. In fact, a cursory reading of the history of geology and paleontology reveals that many of the assumptions and conclusions of those early scientists are no longer held today; they have been replaced with new assumptions and conclusions.



Georges Cuvier, Naturalist

This is what we see in every area of science. Over time, the views of scientists are consistently replaced, often contradicting what had been held before as true. The actual history of science does not reveal a straightforward progression of knowledge as often presented in textbooks. Rather, it shows that scientific thinking is a series of changing “paradigms,” or ways of interpreting bodies of data that are ever-growing and necessarily re-evaluated.

In many instances, a new idea completely replaces a prior idea about the world. Whether one is looking at the history of physics, of geology, or of biology, one sees a fascinating series of shifts and movements that make one wonder how anyone can think science is an ultimate authority. After all, if our views of the world have changed greatly since 1950, even more so since 1900, and radically so since 1850, then why would anyone think our views won’t change just as much (if not far more) by 2050, 2100, or 2150?

History Does Not Change

This is why history is so important. The events of history never change. We don’t debate whether Julius Caesar or George Washington really existed; we don’t wonder if the Constitutional Convention actually happened in Philadelphia. We may not know every aspect of those people and events, but we do know there is an absolute fixity to them. No one can change what actually happened in history.

This is why the Bible is a *history* book, not a science book. The events recorded in it may have an impact on science, but they do not change like science. It is also why the Bible uses genealogies to track the passage of

time: biological parent-child relationships can never be altered. The Bible is about recording real people and real events in real time. What happened in history does not change.

On the other hand, we can be sure that scientific ideas have changed and will continue to change. That's why we can't use them to interpret the Bible.



Adam Sedgwick, Geologist

Just consider what happened in 19th-century England. Many of the early geologists and paleontologists were actually Christians who embraced the view called 'progressive creation': that God had used a series of creation events over long periods to populate the world (they were unsure exactly how long, just much longer than what the Bible presented). Although they accepted long ages, they rejected the

idea of biological evolution as being incompatible with the Bible.

In 1844, however, a book was published entitled *The Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. It argued for the evolution of the universe, of the earth, and of animals and man. It was extremely popular, but not considered scientifically accurate. A number of Christian geologists spoke out against it. Nevertheless, it paved the way for a much more important work by Charles Darwin entitled *Origin of the Species* in 1859.



Asa Gray, Botanist

Within a generation after the publishing of these two books, the views on the history of the world held by those prior geologists were replaced with the views of Darwin and his followers.

But what about Genesis? Just as the Christian geologists had influenced new interpretations of Genesis, a whole new set of interpretations began

to appear that explained the first chapters in light of evolution. In fact, an American scientist named Asa Gray (a close friend of Darwin's), was one of the first to argue for *theistic evolution* as the guiding factor for evolution. Darwin didn't much care for this view, but it became popular with many Christians on both sides of the Atlantic.

Replacing One History with Another

The point is this: there's nothing really new in the world. There are some Christians today who say we must use the current findings of science to interpret the Bible. Some want to go back to progressive creation, others want to argue for theistic evolution. Both groups are just replacing the history presented in Genesis with a history of their own making.

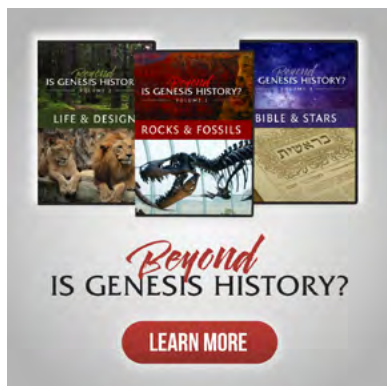
The only solution is for Christians to recognize that the Bible gives us an accurate history of the world from Creation to the consummation of Christ's Kingdom. Genesis is as important as Exodus or Kings or Matthew or Acts. In fact, it can be argued that it is *most* important to the history of the world since it explains the origin of everything.

And how does Genesis relate to the natural world around us? That's the point of the documentary *Is Genesis History?* It examines different lines of scientific evidence to show that it is quite reasonable to accept the Bible as a book of accurate history. Far from being exhaustive, the film is an *introduction* to seeing the world in the light of Genesis. As a number of scientists point out, there is still a lot of work to do.

After all, the world we live in is unimaginably complex. Any honest physicist, biologist, or geologist will tell you that we understand only a small percentage of the natural world. As our knowledge has increased, so too has our appreciation of the sheer immensity and complexity of the universe at every level, from atomic to galactic.

That complexity goes back to the beginning. This means that the best way to understand what happened is to rely on a historical record that is dependable and authoritative. It doesn't mean everything will be easy to understand - it won't be. The history of science also shows us that trying to understand the world takes time, effort, and intelligence. The fact that most of the greatest scientists in history were Christians who trusted Genesis should, however, be an encouragement to us. Perhaps that circumstance will one day come again.

Until then, Christians must strive to understand the natural world as best they can in light of the record in Genesis. We hope that our film is a helpful place to start.



Why Sex is the Best Argument for Creation (and Against Evolution)

Kurt Wise once observed that most people don't realize how many powerful arguments there are for Biblical creation.

He thought this might be because Christians have grown accustomed to responding to evolutionary arguments on naturalistic grounds. But he said this wasn't the best approach.

Instead, Christians should start with 'high ground' arguments that are readily available by looking at the creation.

These are things we regularly experience, but for which evolutionary models don't have reasonable explanations. In his book *Devotional Biology*, he lists a number of them: beauty, biological systems, spiritual life, diversity, mutualism, DNA, and many more.

There is one argument, however, that I think is easily the best: sex.

The Power to Make Everyone Pay Attention

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to speak to four classes of high school Biology and Anatomy students. It was Homecoming that week so the teenagers were understandably restless and distracted.

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I briefly discussed our documentary *Is Genesis History?*, then asked them a question: what was the best argument for creation and against evolution?

Most shrugged their shoulders. Some shifted in their seats and looked around the room.

No one answered, so I said, “Sex.”

You could have heard a pin drop. Over 40 teenagers froze and stared at me. As I began to obliquely discuss aspects of anatomy and biology in light of creation and evolution, they listened intently. This was completely new territory. Not surprisingly, the exact same reaction happened in all four classes.

That is the power of sex. God made it to be one of the most important parts of His creation. People are designed to respond to it in a very specific way.

We creationists should not forget that.

After all, Moses talks about sex in Genesis 2: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Jesus talks about it when He is asked about divorce. Paul talks about it when he’s explaining our relationship to God.

If we are arguing about creation and evolution, we should talk about sex.

A Crazy Number of Interconnections

What do I mean by ‘sex?’

I'm referring to everything from that first moment of attraction between a man and a woman, to the complementary anatomical structures and organs that work so well together, to the millions of interactions that happen on the physical/hormonal/emotional levels, to the love and pleasure of two people becoming one flesh, to cells smaller than the head of a pin contributing 1.5 billion letters of DNA each in order to form a new 3 billion-letter blueprint, to the nonstop application of that genome as it rapidly develops into over 20 trillion cells and 200 types of tissue and hundreds of organs and meters of blood vessels all interacting together, to the final moment a fully-functioning, crying, squirming baby emerges from its mother 6,480 hours later.

That's mind-boggling.



Of course, it's only a tiny fraction of what actually goes on with sexual reproduction. Just pick up an anatomy or biology textbook, or a book on pregnancy, and you quickly realize there are a crazy number of interconnections that are infinitely interdependent.

Sex is the perfect example of *inconceivable* irreducible complexity and design.

But, according to evolutionary theory, all of it ultimately happened by chance. Sex just came to be through a series of random processes, over long periods of time, without any overarching purpose.

Ok - so *how* did that happen?

A Difficult Thing to Explain

It's not as if evolutionary scientists aren't writing about sex. They are.

They just seem to be focusing on the smaller questions such as the usefulness of splitting the genome between a male and a female, or how certain behaviors developed, or single-cell sexual reproduction.

What few people appear to be discussing are wholistic models for how sexual complexity originated step-by-step over hundreds of millions of years. In fact, when you actually consider the magnitude of the situation, 540 million years—the conventional date for the start of complex life—doesn't seem like nearly enough time.

After all, it's not just humans we're talking about. It's millions of species of extinct and living animals that have been, and still are, engaging in sexual reproduction. Each process is almost as complex as that between two humans, although each is also extremely different.

Insects, fish, reptiles, birds, mammals—there are hundreds of thousands of variations of sexual reproduction. From mating rituals to copulation to pregnancy to birth, the complexity just multiples as you examine the diversity of life.



Furthermore, it appears from the fossil record that sea-dwelling trilobites (now extinct) were also male and female. Trilobites are found at the lowest levels of the fossil record, occurring during the Cambrian

explosion. In other words, male and female creatures just appear as male and female.

So how did the division of sexes come to be? The question of which came first during this long development, the male or the female, is an impossible question: don't you have to have both to have offspring?

The truth is that *sexual dimorphism*—different, unique characteristics between males and females—is also a hard thing to explain from an evolutionary origins perspective. Sure, it's easy to recognize the benefits of separating and recombining genomes, but how did all the trillions of uniquely integrated processes and parts and systems in all the different species first originate? And why do they all work so well?

Talking about sexual reproduction in cells doesn't really address the problem. It's like saying you've explained football by pointing to a few blades of grass; everyone knows there's a lot more going on. If it's impossible for us even to understand all the aspects of sex, it's clearly impossible for it to have evolved in a slow, stepwise fashion.

Instead, when you stop and think about it, Genesis provides a far better explanation. The immediate, fiat creation by God in a short span of time (just a few days) is a far better reason for all the incredibly complex aspects of sex.

But it's not just that. Genesis also explains the purpose behind sex. And it's a lot more amazing than most people realize.

A Divinely Human Experience

Ultimately, sex is about the joyful pleasure of personal relationships.

In this case, the sexual marital relationship between a man and a woman mirrors the spiritual marital relationship between Christ and the church. Paul explains it from Genesis, saying: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.” (Eph 5:31-32)

Genesis explains why there is sexual dimorphism in people. We are made in God's image to reflect His attributes and show forth the divine/human relationship as male and female: “in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Gen 1:27)

In other words, the man is to Christ as the woman is to the church. Paul explains: “For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church” and “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” (Eph 5:23,25)

Genesis explains why sex is placed within the structure of marriage. The covenant bond between a man and a woman reflects the covenant bond between Christ and His bride. (Rev 21:2)

Genesis also explains why sex is considered a wonderful, spiritual experience by many people. Unlike evolutionary theory—which sees sex as just a higher animal function—the Bible sees sex as an incredible gift from God, uniquely given to man to show forth His image. In fact, there are numerous Christians who have had spiritual experiences that rival or surpass what they have felt having sex.

Genesis explains why sex has an essential moral nature to it that everyone intrinsically understands. It's why adultery is considered wrong in almost all cultures, Christian or not. It's also why those who have had adultery committed against them always feel betrayed. The prophet Jeremiah observes that adultery is the same as idolatry (Jer 3:9), and mirrors the emotions of God when man betrays Him on a spiritual level.

In fact, almost all the sexual sins of our society can be traced back to spiritual issues.

Homosexuality emerges in a society as the result of worshiping the creature instead of the Creator (Rom 1:25-27); it mirrors man worshiping himself rather than worshiping Christ. This looks more like 'the wife is the head of the wife as the church is the head of the church.' Created similarities replace created differences.

As well, attempts to change gender are ultimately doomed to failure. The essential sexual dimorphism embedded in every part of the creation points to the essential distinctions between God and man. Just as man cannot truly become God, so too, a woman cannot

truly become a man, nor a man a woman. In each of us, our maleness or femaleness is unchangeably stamped on over 50 trillion of our cells.

It is not until we understand the nature of sex, with all its power and complexity and importance, that we can begin to understand its significance both to God and to ourselves.

Talking about Sex

Of course, this may seem new to you. I realize many Christians avoid talking about sex and even get uncomfortable when it comes up. Few have heard it discussed openly in their churches or families.

Considering what's going on in our culture, that probably needs to change. Sex is one of the essential parts of God's creation, something only He could create in order to show forth His glory. If He dedicated an entire book of the Bible to it (The Song of Songs), it's something we should strive to understand from a Biblical perspective.

After all, God put a deep fascination within us toward sex because He wants us to get a sense of the complex relationship He has with us. It's no coincidence that the Bible begins with a marriage and ends with a marriage.

So when evolution comes up next, start talking about sex. I can assure you it will lead to a very interesting and unexpected conversation.

To learn about other high ground arguments, listen to the scientists discuss Life & Design in the second volume of 'Beyond Is Genesis History?'



Have you seen the film
IS GENESIS HISTORY?

WATCH IT NOW

Visit the *Is Genesis History?* Store to get all the resources you need to understand the truth of Genesis at

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