

The Age of the Earth

[Red indicates a reference to the slides.]

I) Why does this matter?

- A) This matters because the credibility of the Bible is at stake. If the Bible describes a planet that is only a few thousand years old, but it's a scientific fact that the earth is 4.6 billion years old, then we have a problem: the Bible is caught in a lie.
- B) How old is the earth?
 - 1) A lot of earth's history has been recorded by people, or can be figured out from archaeology.
 - 2) For example, going back from the present to the time of Christ, we know it's been about **2,000** years.
 - 3) And secular history can take us back even farther. From Christ to Abraham was also about **2,000** years.
 - 4) The **question** is, how long was it from Abraham all the way back to Adam and the beginning of the world? **Genesis 5:3, 6, 9... List.** Those numbers add up to 1,946 years.
 - 5) That would mean the Earth is roughly **6,000** years old.
 - a) "Well, father could mean ancestor, so we don't know if some generations are skipped in this list."
 - b) "And the historical dates from Christ to Abraham aren't iron-clad."
 - 6) Okay, even if we allow for some wiggle room here, the point is, it's somewhere in the 1,000s, not the billions. Some Bible readers give the

age of the earth as 6,000 to 12,000 years.

- C) So what about things we hear in science about the earth being much older than this? I am not a scientist, but let me share a few things I've read.

II) Science has not proved Earth to be billions of years old.

- A) **Romans 1:18-20.** We can look at Creation and see evidence of God. He expects us to be a thinking people. Extend that principle: when we look at evidence, let's try to think and come to the right conclusions (about God and His Word).
- B) **Polystrate fossils.**
 - 1) Let's think about sedimentary rock layers. We look at places like the Grand Canyon and see layer after layer of sedimentary rock. The common explanation given is that this was slowly laid down over vast periods of geologic time. This is the uniformitarian approach, suggesting that each stratum was laid down in a uniform manner, millimeter by millimeter.
 - 2) But what about polystrate fossils? As one article explains:
 - 3) "Embedded in sedimentary rocks all over the globe are what are known as 'polystrate' fossils. Polystrate means 'many layers,' and refers to fossils that cut through at least two sedimentary-rock layers. Probably the most widely recognized of the polystrate fossils are tree trunks that extend vertically through two, three, or more sections of rock that supposedly were laid down in epochs covering millions of years. However, organic material (such as wood) that is exposed to the

elements will rot, not fossilize. Thus, the entire length of these tree trunks must have been preserved quickly, which suggests that the rock layers surrounding them must have been deposited rapidly—possibly (and likely) during a single catastrophe like Noah’s Flood. Trees, reeds, catfish, whales, and the other organisms with which the fossil record abounds—and that exist as polystrate fossils—did not die and lie around for hundreds, thousands, or millions of years while slowly being preserved. Truth be told, polystrate fossils testify loudly to a young Earth whose layers formed rapidly—and not very long ago!” (Butt, 2002).

- 4) In other words, not everything that dies turns into a fossil. What happens to roadkill? Between the buzzards, bugs, and weather, it doesn’t last long. Trees that die typically just rot and decay. But if something gets buried quickly, it gets preserved and can turn into a mineralized rock, or fossil.
- 5) A tree that goes through several layers of sediment is strong evidence that the layers were laid down relatively quickly. “There is no doubt that this type of fossil was formed relatively quickly; otherwise it would have decomposed while waiting for strata to slowly accumulate around it” (Scott Huse, [The Collapse of Evolution](#), as cited in Harrub, 2010, p. 287).
- 6) The numerous polystrate fossils that have been found all over the world provide strong evidence that at least these fossils were buried rapidly (as

in some catastrophe) and the strata did not take millions of years to form. A gradualistic, uniformitarian explanation simply does not fit the evidence, although not all scientists concede that.

- 7) In the 1970’s, a baleen whale was found fossilized and at a 60-degree angle (tail down and head up). A Dr. Olney wrote, “The baleen whale simply stood on its tail for 100,000 years, its skeleton decomposing, while the diatomaceous snow covered its frame millimeter by millimeter” (as cited in Harrub, 2010, p. 288).
 - 8) I am no scientist, but that seems like a stretch to me!
 - 9) **Psalm 19:1**. Again, notice the principle of the verse: we can look at Creation and understand something about the power of God. And we can also look at fossils and other relics of the past and learn something about events on this planet.
 - 10) Christians do not need to run from science. Quite the opposite. Scientific fact will always vindicate the Bible.
- C) **Circular reasoning in the geologic column.**
- 1) What about the fossils? Don’t we know how old all that stuff is?
 - 2) Consider the current method for determining the age of rock.
 - a) Let’s say you have a rock with a fossil in it. We want to know how old the rock is.
 - b) But the scientist will assign a date to the rock based on the fossil.

- c) Well, how could one know how old the fossil is? Because that's where the fossil fits in the evolutionary time frame. In other words, "We believe this fish [clam, snail, insect...] lived 320 million years ago, so this rock must be 320 million years old. (It's an index fossil.)"
 - d) What if you find an unknown fossil in the same rock layer? "It must also be 320 million years old."
 - e) And so the fossils date the rocks, but the rocks date the fossils. Both are subject to the assumption of evolution and an old earth.
- 3) This is circular reasoning, as even evolutionists themselves have admitted...
 - 4) **Niles Eldredge: "Paleontologists cannot operate this way. There is no way simply to look at a fossil and say how old it is unless you know the age of the rocks it comes from...And this poses something of a problem: if we date the rocks by their fossils, how can we then turn around and talk about patterns of evolutionary change through time in the fossil record?" (Time Frames, 1985, as cited in Morris, 1997, p. 240).**
 - 5) **Thomas S. Kemp: "A circular argument arises: Interpret the fossil record in the terms of a particular theory of evolution, inspect the interpretation, and note that it confirms the theory. Well, it would, wouldn't it?" ("A Fresh Look at the Fossil Record," New Scientist, 1985, as cited in Morris, 1994, p. 16).**
- 6) Again, I am no scientist, but I can see a problem with that process because it's illogical!
 - 7) **Isaiah 44:16-17.** That makes about as much sense doesn't it? Just because millions of people believe(d) in idolatry or evolution doesn't mean they're based on truth.
- D) **Faulty dating methods.**
- 1) Radioisotope dating methods are supposedly able to tell us how old some rocks are. These methods can only be used on rocks which were once in a hot molten condition, such as volcanic rocks.
 - 2) Here's my simplistic understanding of this: these methods of dating are based on how long it takes for one radioactive element to decay into another element. For example, a parent isotope such as Uranium-238 will decay into its daughter isotope Lead-206 (or potassium-40 to argon-40).
 - 3) Those rates of decay are known, so if you have a rock, you can measure how much is Uranium and how much has decayed into Lead, and theoretically you could extrapolate that backwards to see how many years ago it would have been 100% Uranium, or when that rock was formed.
 - 4) It sounds interesting, but critics point out that it's **based on assumptions**.
 - a) The rate of decay has always been the same over time.
 - b) There have been no elements added to the rock over time.
 - c) There have been no elements lost from the rock over time.

- d) The amount of daughter elements at the beginning of the process are known.
- 5) If none of that makes sense, let's just look at the results.
Deuteronomy 18:21-22. We're not dealing with prophecy here, but think about that principle. If the outcome is clearly wrong, then there's something wrong with the source.
- 6) Look at the inconsistent results from the Grand Canyon. **Pictures.** According to their own view, the layer up higher "should" be younger than the deeply buried layer, but on almost every test, the higher layer dates much older! How reliable are these dating methods?
- 7) Also, in places where it is known how old the rocks are, the dating comes out wrong. **Table.**
- a) "At Sunset Crater, in northern Arizona, volcanic lava erupted about 900 years ago, but the potassium-argon dating method gave ages of 210,000 and 230,000 years" (Bonner, January 2006, p. 4).
- b) "Lava rocks from the Kaupulehu Flow, Hualalai Volcano, which erupted 1800-1801, were dated by several radioisotope methods. The results included twelve different dates, ranging from 140 million years to 2.96 billion years, with an average date of 1.41 billion years" (Bonner, January 2006, p. 4).
- c) Mt. Saint Helens erupted on May 18, 1980. Dating of its cooled lava rocks should yield either extremely young dates or be untestable because of the lack of daughter elements. "Samples gathered have now been dated using the potassium-argon method. According to radioisotope dating, certain minerals in the lava dome are up to 2.4 million years old. All of the minerals combined yield the date of 350,000 years by the potassium-argon technique. However, we know that these minerals and the rocks that contain them cooled within lava between the years 1980 and 1986" (Morris & Austin, 2003, p. 67).
- 8) Carbon-14 dating is different and can only be used for more recent things that were once alive (plants and animals). It measures how much carbon is left in the bone or tree and calculates backwards to when this thing must have died. Again, notice these published dates to see how unreliable it is: **Table.**
- a) "A living mollusk was tested by carbon-14 and dated as being 3,000 years old" (Harrub, p. 299).
- b) "Freshly killed seals have been dated at 1,300 years old" (Harrub, p. 299).
- c) A musk ox was found frozen in Alaska. The scalp was dated to 24,000 years old, while hair from the hind limb was dated at 7,200 years old (Harrub, p. 299).
- d) "Wood taken from actively growing trees has been dated by the C-14 method as being 10,000 years old" (Harrub, p. 299).
- 9) I am no scientist, but I can easily see that these dating methods are not iron-clad.

E) **Mount St. Helens and “catastrophism.”**

- 1) On May 18, 1980, at 8:32 AM, the Mount St. Helens volcano erupted while geologists from all over the world watched and measured and recorded. The energy output over the next 9 hours was equal to about 30,000 Hiroshima atomic bombs. Over the next days, weeks, and years, that eruption taught geologists a lot about how a catastrophe can make some things happen very fast that had typically been thought to take thousands or millions of years.
- 2) In 2003, John Morris and Steven A. Austin published a **book** entitled Footprints in the Ash: The explosive story of Mount St. Helens. Dr. Morris has a Ph.D. in Geological Engineering and Dr. Austin has a Ph.D. in Sedimentary Geology. They explain in simple terms some of the findings from that eruption. As significant and powerful as Mount St. Helens was, it was actually small to average as volcanoes go (the last explosion at Yellowstone was 2,000 as powerful as Mount St. Helens). And if Mount St. Helens could cause such geologic change, what could a global flood do?
- 3) Allow me simply to read some excerpts from their book, with a few other quotes mixed in.
- 4) The eruption blew the mountain apart and created the largest landslide recorded by man. About 3.3 billion cubic yards of rock and ice and debris moving up to 150 mph! The snow and ice melted and created mud flows that moved at 90 mph and plugged up rivers and

washed bridges away. So the vegetation was scraped away by all this.

- 5) **Picture**. Observers after the eruption first thought that Spirit Lake (a few miles away from Mount St. Helens) had disappeared. Then they discovered that it was still there, but over a million logs floated on its surface. **Pictures**.
- 6) “Creationists suggest that during Noah’s flood, log mats like this may have yielded a deposit of broken plant debris called peat, the precursor to coal” (Morris & Austin, 2003, p. 83).
- 7) **Picture**. Given the great amount of coal which is mined out of the earth, geologists have long wondered what caused the conditions for this coal to form.
- 8) “Creationists have speculated that coal may have been formed as a result of Noah’s flood, during which massive amounts of vegetation were scraped from the continents...During the Flood year, abundant volcanic action produced clays which mixed in with peat. Subsequent deep burial by oceanic muds would have applied the pressure and heat needed to alter them rapidly into coal. A cycle of such decay, decomposition, and metamorphism produced the multiple layers of coal that we see in the geologic record. Unfortunately, no such floating mat existed for creationists to study—until Mount St. Helens erupted, that is. We have been studying it ever since” (Morris & Austin, 2003, p. 86).
- 9) By the way, “Another eruption of Mount St. Helens might some day bury this peat under a hot layer of lava or volcanic ash. If it did, all of the requirements for rapid coalification would be present” (Morris & Austin, 2003, p. 88).
- 10) Dr. Marion Fox, a professor of electronic engineering technology, math, and physics, wrote a book entitled A Study of the Biblical Flood. He agreed that the flood is a

good explanation for the coal found in the earth today: "This weight [of the flood waters on the earth] of several million pounds per square foot would form coal from the plants in the sediment below the water." He goes on to say that "these pressures could bring about the formation of petroleum and natural gas in a matter of days instead of years" (2000, p. 48).

- 11) **Yellowstone Petrified Forest.** One of the supposed proofs of an old Earth has been the petrified forest at Yellowstone National Park, which has been said to take tens of thousands of years to form. "Here, a series of twenty-seven layers, each containing beautiful petrified trees in both upright and horizontal positions, lie exposed by erosion at Specimen Ridge. Over fifty such layers are found at nearby Specimen Creek" (Morris & Austin, 2003, p. 100).
- 12) Specimen Ridge had been used as a strong argument for an old earth because it looked like proof of successive forests that represented tens of thousands of years' worth of geologic activity.
- 13) **Spirit Lake....** However, the movement of over a million logs by Mount St. Helens presented proof of another scenario which could explain this petrified forest. Between 1980 and 2000, more than 500,000 logs sank to the bottom of Spirit Lake, which still actively receives sediment. By 1985, about 20,000 logs had sunk and been buried, roots-down, in the sediment. Interestingly, different trees sank at different times ("Noble fir and Silver fir do not float as long as Douglas fir.") Thus, certain kinds of trees have sunk first and been buried by a certain amount of sediment before

other kinds of trees sank. Many of these trees are visible due to the Army Corps of Engineers draining Spirit Lake by 25 feet (**Picture**).

- 14) Consider if Spirit Lake were completely drained, and then geologists found these trees in this condition. The scene "might be interpreted as a series of successive standing forests, each with a dominant species of tree and each buried by separate volcanic events many years apart. It might even be concluded that the entire series took over tens of thousands of years to develop; but it would be incorrect (Morris & Austin, 2003, p. 99).
- 15) Actually, the trees were from the same time period, grew in another place, were transported through catastrophic mud and water flows, and re-planted along with sediment from the catastrophe over a relatively short period of time.
- 16) "There is ample evidence that petrification need not take very long. Hot water rich in dissolved minerals like silica, as found in some springs at Yellowstone, has petrified a block of wood in only a year" (Sarfati, answersingenesis.org).
- 17) So Specimen Ridge may not be the "proof" of an old earth after all. In fact...
- 18) "Visitors to the Yellowstone petrified 'forest' in years past were greeted by an interpretive marker explaining a multi-thousand year scenario. When confronted with the evidence from Mount St. Helens, the interpreters removed the sign at Specimen Ridge and changed the sign at another upright petrified tree stump location to indicate that the trunk had been relocated by moving muds similar to those at Mount St. Helens. It seems that one of the standard proofs that the Bible could not be trusted was itself in error, and the Bible still stands!" (Morris & Austin, 2003, p. 103).
- 19) **Genesis 7:11-12, 17-22.** If Mount St. Helens could create such massive

changes in its relatively small area, what could a global flood do?

20) **II Peter 3:3-6.** Peter warned that people would forget the flood. “Life on earth has always been the same since the beginning.” Geologists should not forget the flood. Isn’t it possible that much of what we see is the result of catastrophes in the past, the biggest of which would have been the flood?

21) Morris and Austin listed five evidences for catastrophism as proved by Mount St. Helens:

a) **“Quickly Formed Stratification:**

Glowing ‘rivers’ of volcanic ash moved at speeds up to 100 miles per hour. Thin layered strata were deposited. These resemble strata which might be supposed to require many thousands, even millions of years, to form.

b) **Picture.** Each of these layers took only minutes or hours to form. (This is the upper 60 feet of a 600 foot deposit.) “At Mount St. Helens, we saw a living laboratory for the rapid formation of strata” (Morris and Austin, 2003, p. 50).

c) **“The Tapeats Sandstone in the Grand Canyon, similar in many respects to deposits at Mount St. Helens, has traditionally been interpreted as taking long ages to accumulate on the floor of a calm ocean...The Tapeats is now understood to be the result of a series of dynamic underwater currents...Conventional geologists believe that it formed some 550 million years ago. Flood geologists, on the other hand, suspect that the Tapeats was one of the early deposits of Noah’s flood...Catastrophic deposits covering a large region are common in the geologic record. Biblical catastrophism would predict exactly that!” (Morris & Austin, 2003).**

d) **Rapidly Eroded Canyons:** Canyons were eroded through solid rock. A new system of canyons forms the upper drainage basin of the North Fork of the Toutle River. It might seem that slow erosion formed these during countless thousands of years.

e) Under normal circumstances and uniform conditions, it would take a long time for water to cut a 100-foot canyon in hard basaltic rock. But that’s the sort of thing that happened **rapidly** at Mount St. Helens.

f) **Upright Deposited Logs in Spirit Lake:** Tens of thousands of logs, eroded from slopes around Spirit Lake, have been ‘replanted’ in standing position on the bottom of the lake. These might seem to be a succession of forests grown during many thousands of years.

g) **Rapidly Formed Peat Layer in Spirit Lake:** Sheets of conifer bark have accumulated in the lake as layered, coarse, textured peat. The deposit has significant similarity to the composition and texture of coal. Coal is usually assumed to be a slowly formed swamp deposit.

h) **Quick Recovery of Ecosystem in Blast Zone:** Living things survived in the most severely devastated areas and are flourishing in the adverse conditions. The extraordinary response of living things to catastrophe has caused textbooks on ecosystem recovery to be rewritten” (2003, pp. 112-117).

22) I am no geologist. But it does look pretty convincing that catastrophes like volcanoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, avalanches, and a global flood could account for what geologists find today. Maybe it wasn’t a **uniform**, gradual process that made the planet look like it does today. (Maybe there was something besides the small river at the bottom of the Grand Canyon

that was responsible for the Canyon.)

23) “Noah’s flood totally restructured the surface of the earth and laid down, among other things, many layers of sediment full of the remains of dead plants and animals. The sediments soon hardened into rock, and the organic material fossilized. We see those deposits now as sedimentary rocks and fossils. Elsewhere we see great amounts of volcanic and metamorphic rock, far greater than could possibly form under today’s conditions. These same rocks and fossils, when interpreted under the assumption of uniformity, are thought to provide evidence for evolution and the old earth. That interpretation wrongly includes the denial of both the Flood and creation.” (Morris & Austin, 2003, pp. 122-123).

24) Also consider “apparent age.” **Genesis 1:11-13**. There were trees bearing fruit, but how old were the trees? **1:27-28, 31**. Adam and Eve were mature enough to be fruitful and multiply, but how old were they? God can create something that looks older than it is.

F) **Dinosaur fossils with original tissue.**

- 1) Scientists are finding dinosaur fossils with original tissue still in them.
- 2) Think about how fossils form. Let’s say a dinosaur dies and is quickly buried. A fossil is formed when the conditions are just right so that water infused with minerals seeps into the bones, and the original bone material decays over time, and all that’s left is hardened mineral in

the shape of that original bone. That’s one way a fossil is formed.

- 3) But now, scientists are discovering that many of their fossils still have original tissue inside them. In other words, there is more there than hardened mineral.
- 4) Here’s the problem for scientists: That material should have decayed a long time ago (especially if dinosaurs died off 68 million years ago). So how can you explain its presence today in numerous fossils?
- 5) As one article put it: “A completely different class of fossils holds remnants of animal biochemicals like proteins, pigments, and DNA that minerals never replaced and lab tests indicate that these organic tissue components could not last a million years” (Thomas, 2014, p. 6).
- 6) “In recent decades, soft, squishy tissues have been discovered inside fossilized dinosaur bones. They seem so fresh that it appears as though the bodies were buried only a few thousand years ago. Since many think of a fossil as having had the original bone material replaced by minerals, the presence of actual bone--let alone pliable blood vessels, red blood cells, and proteins inside the bone--is quite extraordinary. These finds also present a dilemma” (Thomas, 2009).
- 7) I first heard about this from a story that appeared on the CBS show 60 Minutes featuring scientists Jack Horner and **Mary Schweitzer**. She put a fossil fragment in some acid to dissolve the outer layer of mineral, but the acid worked too quickly and dissolved all of the solid mineral, except there was something left

behind: “things that looked suspiciously like flexible, transparent **blood vessels**. She finally mustered the courage to tell Horner.

‘She said she dissolved the bone away and there were blood vessels. And, you know, I was like shocked,’ Horner remembered. ‘How could that be?’

The things Schweitzer was finding inside dinosaur bones - blood vessels, and even what seemed to be intact cells - pose a radical challenge to the existing rules of science: that organic material can't possibly survive even one million years, let alone 68 million” (CBS, 2009).

- 8) You can go watch Mary Schweitzer’s video of soft tissue being pulled and flexed with tweezers in a CBS 60 minutes story (around the 9:40 mark).
- 9) They published their findings in the journal *Science* and immediately came under attack. It will be interesting to see what explanations are offered as to how this original material is still around if dinosaurs died off some 68 million years ago!
- 10) God created all life in the beginning, so that means humans and dinosaurs co-existed.
- 11) Behemoth: **Job 40:15-18, 23-24**. Hippo? **40:17a**.
- 12) Leviathan: **Job 41:1-2, 7-8, 13, 25-30**. Crocodile? People kill those all the time. What about vv. **19-21**? Electric eels can produce 600 volts without shocking themselves. Fireflies can produce light. Komodo dragons have mouths full of deadly bacteria that doesn’t hurt them. Bombardier beetles mix chemicals in

their bodies that shoot out at 212 degrees F. I can definitely believe that God can make a dinosaur that breathes fire!

- 13) Why isn’t the word “dinosaur” in the Bible? That word was not coined until 1842.

III) **Conclusion.**

A) **There is no need to try to reinterpret Genesis 1-2.**

- 1) Day Age Theory (each day represents eons of time). **Exodus 20:9-11**. There’s no reason (scientific or Biblical) to believe these were anything but 6 literal, 24-hour days.
- 2) Gap Theory (there was a gap lasting eons of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:3).

B) **There is no reason to believe science has disproved the Bible.**

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