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## Mind Games Survival Course Manual



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# Science and Earth History

## What is the relationship between the Bible and science?

Rich Milne

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### IV. Concluding Thoughts

#### A. *Avoid 'All-or-Nothingism' and Live with the Tension*

In the same way I should be very much surprised if we had a unified knowledge of both the Bible and the world that had no loose ends. Why should theology and natural science ever be expected to agree fully when each by itself has plenty of loose ends? The problems and apparent contradictions do not exist between nature and the Bible, but between our understandings of these two very different revelations of God. Therefore, we should not panic over discrepancies between science and theology any more than we panic over discrepancies on theological exegesis or discrepancies in scientific study of rocks..... We should be content to let both bodies of revelation speak for themselves and listen as carefully as we can. If there is apparent disagreement or tension between theological science and natural science, so be it. . . . We know that in the mind of God all the facts regarding the Flood agree and dovetail into a neat system with no loose ends. We must therefore be cautious in using science as an apologetic device. We should not fall into the trap of thinking that somehow Scripture is more reliable or trustworthy if it is at every point backed up by scientific evidence, nor should we somehow suspect that Scripture may be untrustworthy if science does not back it up at every point. {7}

We must take ample time, and sometimes this will mean a long time, to consider whether the apparent clash between science and revelation means that the theory set forth by science is wrong or whether we must reconsider what we thought the Bible says. {8}

#### 2. *Do the Bible and Science Really Address the Same Issues?*

The fundamental issue at stake [in Genesis] could not have been the scientific question of how things achieved their present form and by what processes, nor the historical question about time periods and chronological order. The issue was idolatry, not science; syncretism, not natural history; theology, not chronology; affirmation of faith in one transcendent God, not the empirical or speculative theories of origin. {9}

[T]he Biblical record, accepted in its natural and literal sense, gives the only scientific and satisfying account of the origin of all things. . . . The creation account is clear, definite, sequential and matter-of-fact, giving every appearance of straightforward historical narrative. {10}

### **3. *Sort Out the Issues From the "Isms."***

#### 1. A clear example of Evolutionism

Johnson has excellent reasons for fearing and despising modern scientific conceptions of the evolutionary process. He clearly wants animals and plants (humans in particular-he says nothing about disgusting parasites) to have been designed by divine purpose. He wants to have free will and divinely inspired moral laws that last forever unchanged, and I suspect that he wants to have some kind of ultimate meaning in life coupled with life after death. If modern evolutionary biology is true, then all these lofty desires are hopeless. {11}

#### 2. Evolution as the Root of All Evil

Evolution is the root of atheism, of communism, nazism, behaviorism, racism, economic imperialism, militarism, libertinism, anarchism, and all manner of anti- Christian systems of belief and practice. {12}

#### 3. These are the extremes, and one gives birth to the other.

Could there be a better middle ground? Many scientists who believe in evolution see it only as science, not a source of morality or religion.

This situation may be frustrating for someone like me who has spent a professional lifetime working with the power of Darwinian models and who feels no moral threat in their potential truth (for a fact of nature cannot challenge a precept of morality). {13}

### **4. *A Final Warning To All of Us of the Need to Take Seriously the Studies Done by Non- Christians.***

Now, it is a disgraceful and dangerous thing for an infidel to hear a Christian, presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talking

nonsense on these topics; and we should take all means to prevent such an embarrassing situation, in which people show up vast ignorance in a Christian and laugh it to scorn. The shame is not so much that an ignorant individual is derided, but that people outside the household of the faith think our sacred writers held such opinions, and, to the great loss of those for whose salvation we toil, the writers of our Scripture are criticized and rejected as unlearned men. If they find a Christian mistaken in a field which they themselves know well and hear him maintaining his foolish opinions about our books, how are they going to believe those books in matters concerning the resurrection of the dead, the hope of eternal life, and the kingdom of heaven, when they think their pages are full of falsehoods on facts which they themselves have learnt from experience and the light of reason?{14}

## Notes

1. Henry Morris, *Studies in the Bible and Science* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1966), 110. Quoted in Van Till, et al., *Portraits of Creation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 198.
2. Conrad Hyers, "Dinosaur Religion: On Interpreting and Misinterpreting the Creation Texts," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* (September 1984), 146.
3. Many books have been published in the last few years dealing with the sometimes strident and sometimes supportive interactions between science and theology. The following titles represent only some of the many books that might be recommended. David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, *God and Nature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986); Colin A. Russell, *Cross-Currents: Interactions Between Science and Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985); Stanley L. Jaki, *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978); Stanley L. Jaki, *The Origin of Science and the Science of its Origin* (South Bend, Ind.: Regnery/Gateway, 1978).
4. Duane T. Gish, *Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record* (El Cajon, Calif.: Creation-Life Publishers, 1985, 50). Page 50 gives the 8 billion figure. I have used 30.3 million kilometers as the size of Africa.
5. The Arbuckle limestone formation in Oklahoma
6. Stephen Jay Gould, "Darwin and Paley Meet the Invisible Hand," *Natural History*, November 1990, 8. Charles Darwin himself remarked, in a letter to his close friend and great British botanist Joseph Hooker in 1856: "What a book a devil's chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering, low, and horribly cruel works of nature!" Quoted in Gould, 12.
7. Davis A. Young, *Christianity and the Age of the Earth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 158.
8. Francis Schaeffer, *No Final Conflict* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 24.
9. Conrad Hyers, "Dinosaur Religion: On Interpreting and Misinterpreting the Creation Texts," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* (September 1984), 146.
10. Henry M. Morris, *The Remarkable Birth of Planet Earth* (San Diego: Institute for Creation Research, 1972), vii, 84.

11. William B. Provine, in a response to Phillip Johnson's *Evolution as Dogma* (Dallas: Haughton Publishing Company, 1990), 19.
12. Henry Morris, *The Remarkable Birth of Planet Earth* (San Diego: CLP, 1972), 75.
13. Gould, 16.
14. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, chapter 19 [pp. 42--43 in the English translation].

### **For Further Reading**

Besides the books listed below, be sure to look at the bibliography for Creation/Evolution. The books have been listed by the view that the author takes on evolution. Some of the books consider more than one view, and some writers are difficult to put in one category.

### **General Books**

Moreland, J. P., ed. *The Creation Hypothesis*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994.

Eleven authors put forward the evidence for design in the universe and the need for a Creator from both a philosophical and a biological perspective. There are chapters here by both young earth and progressive creationists, making this a useful book to those of either persuasion. The design argument was thrown out soon after Darwin, but is now making a much-deserved comeback, with much support from philosophy. A very worthwhile book to work through.

Pitman, Michael. *Adam and Evolution*. London: Rider & Company, 1984.

Distributed in this country by Baker Book House, this book presents a critique of evolution without coming down in favor of an old earth or a young earth. Pitman presents many details you won't find elsewhere, and does so in a very engaging manner. He has especially good chapters on human evolution and various aspects of organic evolution in general.

Russell, Colin A. *Cross-currents*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1985.

While this book is focused on the history of the interactions between science and Christianity, it has several excellent sections on evolution and evolutionism, and very helpful parts on the churches role in the acceptance of Darwin's theory both in England and in America. Of the truckload of books on science and religion, this is one of the best, and fairly easy reading.

Thurman, L. Duane. *How to Think About Evolution*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1978.

This is an excellent example of how to treat these issues with thought and integrity. Thurman examines the philosophies and world views that underlie different views of origins, and presents very helpful guides to disentangling the data from the interpretations. You will not know Thurman's view when you finish, but he should have helped you think through your own view and the reasons you hold it. Buy or borrow this book.

Youngblood, Ronald, ed. *The Genesis Debate*. Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1986.

In eleven chapters, proponents of various views on Genesis, argue the pro's and con's of their views. From were the days of Genesis 1 24 hours, to was the flood global, to were they people before Adam and Eve. Some chapters are better argued than others, but for the range of questions covered there is no better book. The book also includes a good set of notes for the sources of various quotations and arguments used. Worth buying.

### ***Recent Creation Books***

Gish, Duane T. *Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record*. El Cajon, Calif.: Creation-Life Publishers, 1985.

This is one of the classic books from a recent creation perspective ( it used to be titled *Evolution: The Fossils Say No!*), and while it has rather too many old, recycled quotations from evolutionists who would be amazed to see their work quoted in this context, the book does present many well-reasoned critiques of evolution as well. This is certainly the best rebuttal to evolution from a recent creation perspective.

Morris, Henry M. *Scientific Creationism*. San Diego, Calif.: Creation-Life Publishers, 1974.

Though an older book, this is still in print, and contains most of the arguments that the Institute for Creation Research uses against evolution. There is also a section, *Creation According to Scripture*, in which Morris shows what he feels are the weaknesses of theistic evolution and the day-age theory.

Morris, Henry M. and John C. Whitcomb. *The Genesis Flood*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1961.

This is the book which launched the current resurgence of recent creation, and after thirty years it is still in print because no one else has attempted to gather together all the geological information which would point to the flood as the source of almost all geological deposits. Many arguments are in need of updating, but this is the primary source book for flood geology.

### ***Recent Creation Organizations***

Creation Research Society  
P. O. Box 14016  
Terre Haute, IN 47803

Publishes the *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, the only technical recent creationist journal in the US.

Institute for Creation Research  
2716 Madison Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92116  
(619) 448--0900

Henry Morris and Duane Gish are the best known recent creationists and the most visible members of ICR. Publishes *Acts and Facts* each month, with a short "Impact" article in each issue.

### ***Progressive Creation Books***

Blocher, Henri. *In the Beginning*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1984.

This is an English translation of a book that first appeared in France in 1979. This is a book dealing with the literary and exegetical questions that surround Genesis, though there is a short Appendix on scientific issues. Blocher argues for the "framework" hypothesis—that Genesis 1 gives the structure for God's acts of creation, not a literal account of His work. This is a very good book on the issue of literary interpretation, and whether you agree with his conclusions or not, you will certainly profit from his concern to interact with the text in an honest and open way.

Custance, Arthur C. *The Flood: Local or Global?* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1979.

This book is volume IX of the Doorway Papers, a unique collection of essays written by Custance over more than twenty years. While this volume does not deal with the age of the earth, it is perhaps the fullest account of evidence for a local flood that none the less destroyed all people on the earth. Any of the volumes in this series are worth reading (others include *Evolution or Creation?*, *Genesis and Early Man*, *Noah's Three Son's*, and *Science and Faith*), though many are beginning to be rather dated.

Radmacher, Earl D. and Robert D. Preus, editors. *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1984.

In an essay entitled "The Trustworthiness of Scripture in Areas Relating to Natural Science" Walter Bradley and Roger Olsen present the day-age view at some length. They also look at the assumptions of both young-earth and old-earth positions, and present an appendix by Norm Geisler on views of Genesis. This essay is followed by a response by Old Testament scholar Gleason Archer supporting their reading of Genesis 1 that discusses some of the exegetical issues in more depth. This article is followed by a response by Henry Morris, challenging almost all of the points and asserting that the recent creation view is the only correct way to read Genesis 1.

Ross, Hugh. *Genesis One: A Scientific Perspective*. Sierra Madre, Calif.: Wisemen Productions, 1983.

Ross is an astrophysicist who started an apologetics ministry to present the scientific evidence for God's work in creation (see *Reasons to Believe* below). This booklet presents the usual harmonization of Genesis 1 with the geologic ages, and adds some interesting reasons for considering the days of Genesis 1 to be long ages.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Creation and Time*. Colorado Springs, Col.: NavPress, 1994.

Written with the intent to bring about some much-needed reconciliation between young-earth and progressive creationists, Ross has the right goal but the too often the wrong language. He is sometimes too sure of his own position: "They are compelled to deny physical reality to keep their faith." And sometimes very misleading in quotations, as in summarizing Aardsma's position (both of these are on page 118). The book does provide a rebuttal of young-earth evidences for a young earth, as well as a quite lengthy defense of long days for Genesis One.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Creator and the Cosmos*. Colorado Springs, Col.: NavPress, 1993.

A book to follow Ross's *Fingerprint of God*, this book presents new evidence for design in the universe, a deeper discussion of quantum cosmology, a review of Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, and Ross's view that extradimensionality (having more than three dimensions) is the answer to questions from the incarnation to free will.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Fingerprint of God*. Orange, Calif.: Promise Publishing Company, 1989.

Ross considers the Big Bang to have been God's chosen means to start the universe. In this book he discusses what is entailed by the theory and why he feels the evidence for it is compelling. Probably the best Christian consideration of Big Bang cosmology. he treats the data in some depth, and has many interesting quotations along the way. Also covers evidence for design in the cosmos and his own views on the interpretation of Genesis One. If you want a book that covers Big Bang in some detail, this is it.

Young, Davis A. *Christianity and the Age of the Earth*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982.

Young is a geologist who teaches at Wheaton College and is the most notable of those scientists who have held to a day-age view. In some detail the book discusses evidences for an old earth, and answers the usual arguments for a young earth. Young provides a very helpful chapter on radiometric dating, and deals with many of the issues regarding its reliability. In recent years Young seems to have moved to a theistic evolution view, but this and the following book are still very helpful.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Creation and the Flood*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1977.

Young shows why he disagrees with theistic evolution, and presents a number of thoughtful comments on the text of Genesis. His discussion of the flood is somewhat short and disappointing, given the title of the book, but he does opt for a literal flood which probably left little geological evidence.

### ***Progressive Creation Organizations***

Reasons to Believe  
P. O. Box 5978  
Pasadena, CA 91117--5978  
(818) 335--1480

Publishes *Facts and Faith* quarterly. Started by Hugh Ross, Reasons to Believe concentrates on scientific evidence that supports creation, particularly in astronomy, which is Ross's field. They also have a Christian answers hotline in the evenings at this phone number.

### ***Theistic Evolution Books***

Van Till, Howard J. *The Fourth Day*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986.

Van Till is a professor of physics and astronomy at Calvin College, and supports a model of evolution constantly supervised by the Creator. Much of this book

deals with astronomical evidence for an old universe, but he does interact with the creation/evolution issue at some length.

\_\_\_\_\_, Davis A. Young, and Clarence Menninga. *Science Held Hostage: What's Wrong with Creation Science AND Evolutionism*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1988.

As the subtitle suggests, this book attacks what it sees as extremes in both directions. Four chapters deal with young earth arguments, three chapters deal with science as religion, and one chapter deals with creation science as folk science. When you put Henry Morris at one end and Carl Sagan at the other, you have a range that should get most people at least interested. The discussion of young earth arguments is quite helpful.

\_\_\_\_\_, Robert E. Snow, John H. Stek, Davis A. Young. *Portraits of Creation*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990.

Covers much of the same territory as the above book, but with more depth and much more interaction with the Bible. In this book Davis Young seems to have joined the camp of the theistic evolutionists. Has several good chapters on the history of the creation/evolution debate, and a chapter each on astronomy as an evidence for an old universe, and the structure of the creation narrative in Genesis. This is probably the best critique of young-earth creationism.

Wright, Richard T. *Biology Through the Eyes of Faith*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989.

Wright is a professor of biology at Gordon College, and writes in a properly cautious tone about how evolution can be seen as a mechanism that God used to accomplish His purposes. The last part of the book is an especially helpful section on the Christian and our ecological responsibility. His discussion of what science is and its limitations is helpful as well.

### ***Theistic Evolution Organizations***

American Scientific Affiliation  
P. O. Box 668  
Ipswich, MA 01938

The ASA publishes a quarterly called *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* which is certainly the leading exponent of theistic evolution, and has a running critique of recent creation. The book reviews are particularly helpful as they cover a very wide range of books, many of them outside the realm of their own views.

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