

Creation: 'where's the proof?'

When the person you talk to on creation insists that you 'leave the Bible out of it', they are really saying the deck should be stacked one way.

by Ken Ham

Over the years, many people have challenged me with a question like:

'I've been trying to witness to my friends. They say they don't believe the Bible and aren't interested in the stuff in it. They want real proof that there's a God who created, and then they'll listen to my claims about Christianity. What proof can I give them *without mentioning the Bible* so they'll start to listen to me?'

Briefly, my response is as follows.

Evidence

Creationists and evolutionists, Christians and non-Christians all have the *same* evidence—the same facts. Think about it: we all have the same earth, the same fossil layers, the same animals and plants, the same stars—the facts are all the same.

The difference is in the way we all *interpret* the facts. And why do we interpret facts differently? Because we start with different *presuppositions*. These are things that are assumed to be true, without being able to prove them. These then become the basis for other conclusions. *All* reasoning is based on presuppositions (also called *axioms*). This becomes especially relevant when dealing with past events.

Past and present

We all exist in the present—and the facts all exist in the present. When one is trying to understand how the evidence came about (Where did the animals come from? How did the fossil layers form? etc.), what we are actually trying to do is to connect the past to the present.

However, if we weren't there in the past to observe events, how can we know what happened so we can explain the present? It would be great to have a time machine so we could know for sure about past events.

Christians of course claim they do, in a sense, have a 'time machine'. They have a book called the Bible which claims to be the Word of God who has always been there, and has revealed to us the major events of the past about which we need to know.

On the basis of these events (Creation, Fall, Flood, Babel, etc.), we have a set of presuppositions to build a way of thinking which enables us to interpret the evidence of the present.

Evolutionists have certain beliefs about the past/present that they presuppose, e.g. no God (or at least none who performed acts of special creation), so they build a different way of thinking to interpret the evidence of the present.

Thus, when Christians and non-Christians argue about the evidence, in reality they are arguing about their *interpretations* based on their *presuppositions*.

That's why the argument often turns into something like:

'Can't you see what I'm talking about?'

'No, I can't. Don't you see how wrong you are?'

'No, I'm not wrong. It's obvious that I'm right.'

'No, it's not obvious.' And so on.

These two people are arguing about the same evidence, but they are looking at the evidence through different glasses.

It's not until these two people recognize the argument is really about the presuppositions they have to start with, that they will begin to deal with the foundational reasons for their different beliefs. A person will not interpret the evidence differently until they put on a different set of glasses—which means to change one's presuppositions.

I've found that a Christian who understands these things can actually put on the evolutionist's glasses (without accepting the presuppositions as true) and understand how they look at evidence. However, for a number of reasons, including spiritual ones, a non-Christian usually can't put on the Christian's glasses—unless they recognize the presuppositional nature of the battle and are thus beginning to question their own presuppositions.

It is of course sometimes possible that just by presenting 'evidence', you can convince a person that a particular scientific argument for creation makes sense 'on the facts'. But usually, if that person then hears a different *interpretation* of the same evidence that seems better than yours, that person will swing away from your argument, thinking they have found 'stronger facts'.

However, if you had helped the person to understand this issue of presuppositions, then they will be better able to recognize this for what it is—a different interpretation based on differing presuppositions—i.e. starting beliefs.

As a teacher, I found that whenever I taught the students what I thought were the 'facts' for creation, then their other teacher would just re-interpret the facts. The students would then come back to me saying, 'Well sir, you need to try again.'

However, when I learned to teach my students how we interpret facts, and how interpretations are based on our presuppositions, then when the other teacher tried to reinterpret the facts, the students would challenge the teacher's basic assumptions. Then it wasn't the students who came back to me, but the other teacher! This teacher was upset with me because the students wouldn't accept her interpretation of the evidence and challenged the very basis of her thinking.

What was happening was that I had learned to teach the students *how* to think rather than just *what* to think. What a difference that made to my class! I have been overjoyed to find, sometimes decades later, some of those students telling me how they became active, solid Christians as a result.

Debate terms

If one agrees to a discussion without using the Bible as some people insist, then *they* have set the terms of the debate. In essence these terms are:

1. **'Facts' are neutral.** However, there are no such things as 'brute facts'; *all* facts are interpreted. Once the Bible is eliminated in the argument, then the Christians' presuppositions are gone, leaving them unable to effectively give an alternate interpretation of the facts. Their opponents then have the upper hand as they still have *their* presuppositions — see [Naturalism, logic and reality](#).

2. **Truth can/should be determined independent of God.** However, the Bible states: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Psalm 111:10); 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge' (Proverbs 1:7). 'But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned' (1 Corinthians 2:14).

A Christian cannot divorce the spiritual nature of the battle from the battle itself. A non-Christian is *not* neutral. The Bible makes this very clear: 'The one who is not with Me is against Me, and the one who does not gather with Me scatters' (Matthew 12:30); 'And this is the condemnation, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the Light, because their deeds were evil' (John 3:19).

Agreeing to such terms of debate also implicitly accepts their proposition that the Bible's account of the universe's history is irrelevant to understanding that history!

Ultimately, God's Word convicts

1 Peter 3:15 and other passages make it clear we are to use every argument we can to convince people of the truth, and 2 Cor. 10:4-5 says we are to refute error (like Paul did in his ministry to the Gentiles). Nonetheless, we must never forget Hebrews 4:12: 'For the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing apart of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.'

Also, Isaiah 55:11: 'So shall My word be, which goes out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do.'

Even though our human arguments may be powerful, ultimately it is God's Word that convicts and opens people to the truth. In all of our arguments, we must not divorce what we are saying from the Word that convicts.

Practical application

When someone tells me they want 'proof' or 'evidence', not the Bible, my response is as follows:

"You might not believe the Bible but I do. And I believe it gives me the right basis to understand this universe and correctly interpret the facts around me. I'm going to give you some examples of how building my thinking on the Bible explains the world and is not contradicted by science. For

instance, the Bible states that God made distinct *kinds* of animals and plants. Let me show you what happens when I build my thinking on this presupposition. I will illustrate how processes such as natural selection, genetic drift, etc. can be explained and interpreted. You will see how the science of genetics makes sense based upon the Bible.'

One can of course do this with numerous scientific examples, showing how the issue of sin and judgment, for example, is relevant to geology and fossil evidence. And how the Fall of man, with the subsequent Curse on creation, makes sense of the evidence of harmful mutations, violence, and death.

Once I've explained some of this in detail, I then continue:

'Now let me ask you to defend *your* position concerning these matters. Please show me how *your* way of thinking, based on *your* beliefs, makes sense of the same evidence. And I want you to point out where my science and logic are wrong.'

In arguing this way, a Christian is:

1. Using biblical presuppositions to build a way of thinking to interpret the evidence.
2. Showing that the Bible and science go hand in hand.¹
3. Challenging the presuppositions of the other person (many are unaware they have these).
4. Forcing the debater to logically defend his position consistent with science and his own presuppositions (many will find that they cannot do this).
5. Honouring the Word of God that convicts the soul.

Remember, it's no good convincing people to believe in creation, without also leading them to believe and trust in the Creator/Redeemer, Jesus Christ. God honours those who honour His Word. We need to use God-honouring ways of reaching people with the truth of what life is all about.

Naturalism, logic and reality

Those arguing against creation may not even be conscious of the most basic presupposition, one which excludes God *a priori*, and naturalism/materialism (everything came from matter, there is no supernatural, no prior creative intelligence).² The following two examples highlight some problems with that assumption

1. A young man approached me at a seminar and said, 'Well, I still believe in the big bang, and that we are here here by chance random processes. I don't believe in God.' I answered him, 'Well, then obviously your brain, and your thought processes, are also the product of random processes. You don't know whether it evolved the right way, or what right would mean in that context. Young man, you don't know if you're making correct statements or not, or whether you're asking me the right questions.'

The young man looked at me and blurted out, 'What was that but you recommended?' He finally realized that his belief undercut its own foundations —such 'reasoning' destroys the very basis for reasoning.

2. On another occasion, a man came to me after a seminar and said, 'Actually, I'm an atheist. Because I don't believe in God, I don't believe in absolutes, so I recognize that I can't even be sure of reality.' I responded, 'Then how do you know you're really here making this statement or not?' he replied. 'What point?' I asked. The man looked at me, smiled, and said, 'Maybe I should go home.' I responded, 'Maybe it won't be there.' 'Good point,' the man said. 'What point?' I replied.

This man certainly got the message. If there is no God, ultimately philosophically, how can one talk about reality? How can one rationally believe that there is such a thing as truth, let alone know what it is?

Ed. Note: for more information on formal logic and the Christian worldview see [Loving God With All Your Mind: Logic and Creation](#). [Return](#)