

WORLD BY DESIGN[®]

NEWSLETTER

JULY—OCTOBER 2020

EDITOR: TERRY IVERS



Table of Contents

[Page 1](#)

Is The Whole Bible Truly The Word Of God?

By Robert Moak,
President of CRSEF

[Page 2](#)

The Biblical Adam in the Twenty-First Century Pt. 2

By Edwin Stortz

[Page 3](#)

How Do You Approach The Bible?

By Terry Ivers

[Page 4](#)

Fulfilled Bible prophecy: The Golden Gate

By Chaplain Bill Oehler

[Page 5](#)

Soft Tissue Found In Dinosaur Bones

By Eric J. Norman, PH. D.

[Page 6](#)

Understanding the Christian Concept of Redemption

By Bob Bernet

[Page 7](#)

Editor's Thoughts

[Page 8](#) [Page 9](#)

CRSEF Monthly Programs

[Page 30](#)

Kid's Fun Page

[Page 31](#)

CRSEF Donation Form

Is The Whole Bible Truly The Word Of God?

By Robert Moak, President of CRSEF

Do you espouse to be a Bible-believing Christian? If you answered yes, then the next question for you is this, “**How old do you believe the earth is?**” In my experience, the following list shows how people have responded when I asked them this question. I have been presenting the Creation account for over 30 years now at churches and at monthly library meetings that CRSEF has sponsored, and in Homeschool Co-op teaching sessions, and at Cincinnati Teen Challenge at both Men’s and Women’s locations! If you have an answer to this question “write it down!” Then continue to read this article and compare your answer to the answers listed. If your answer is not included, please send it to me, I would like to include it in my list! I will also send you an answer to your question!

I believe the age of the earth is unimportant; I put my hope in Jesus!

If you feel this way, it makes me wonder what other chapters of the Old Testament do you ignore, or is it just the first 11? Is the God you adore powerful enough to control the written texts of the Bible? If God is powerful enough to do this, then why did God allow His Word to be written as a form of poetry, which can thus, be ignored as just some mythical account of Creation that is lacking accuracy, or even worse an account that is a false presentation, which we could refer to as a lie! Is the God you adore possibly a liar?

I believe that modern science has proven that the earth is about 4.6 billion years old!

If this is what you believe then you must understand that if you also believe that the Bible is God’s Word, then you cannot justify both the secular scientist’s beliefs and the first 11 chapters of Genesis! These written accounts are quite different, and they both cannot be true.

There have been many ideas of how to resolve these different accounts of creation, by adding information to the Biblical account of creation, to allow for the additional time needed to allow acceptance of the theories of mankind to adjust the Word of God to match the timeline needed by secular science.

(Continued on page 10.)

The Biblical Adam in the Twenty-First Century

Part 2 of 3

Adam: According to Paul at Athens

By Edwin Stortz

All Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible* (1971).

Part 1 of this series, “Adam: According to Michelangelo,” featured the sixteenth-century artist and his universally acclaimed painting “Creation of Adam,” inspired by his vision of the biblical text found in Genesis 2:7: *“Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”*

Moving now from Adam according to Michelangelo in Rome, we back track to Adam according to the apostle Paul in mid first-century Athens. Continuing with the same theme as to the origin, identity, and significance of the first man created by God, our focus now is upon the importance of Adam in the teaching of Paul and, in particular, his monumental proclamation on Mars Hill to the philosophers of that day.

The Life and Significance of Paul

Long before Paul’s famous sermon in Athens, the apostle had traveled many long and twisted miles in his journey of life. Born as Saul of Tarsus in Cilicia (present-day Turkey), around 5 BC), he was educated in the school of Gamaliel, knowing both Hebrew and Greek. Early in his life, Paul was proud of his impeccable Jewish ancestry: *“Circumcised on the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless”* (Philippians 3:5–6).

About midpoint of his life, Paul was present at and consented to the stoning of Steven, recorded in Acts 7:58: *“And when they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.”*

While Paul was en route to Damascus to persecute more Christians, a most dramatic and life-changing event occurred in his life: the Lord suddenly and miraculously overwhelmed him with a great light (which left him temporarily blind) and spoke to him. Nothing can diminish this transformation in the apostle-to-be.

Paul, after Jesus, must be considered one of the most important figures in history. Of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament, thirteen are attributed to Paul. Paul’s epistles occupy approximately one-fourth of the entire New Testament. Using the vast network of Roman roads (and at times the sea), Paul traveled to what are now modern-day Israel, Syria, Turkey, Greece, and Italy. His long and arduous journeys are described in the book of Acts in surprisingly good detail. Biblical scholars, by studying Paul’s travel routes described in the Bible, have calculated that the apostle traveled more than 10,000 miles—by foot!

[PAGE 1](#)

[\(Continued on page 14 \)](#)

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How Do You Approach The Bible?

By: Terry Ivers, Editor of World By Design Newsletter

Let me start by making it clear to everyone reading this, I believe that The Holy Bible to be the Holy inerrant, inspired revelation of God. I also believe as the apostles did that it was written by men, who were inspired by the Holy Spirit, to reveal God's revelation to man ²⁰ *Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet's interpretation, ²¹ because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*" 2 Peter 1:20-21 (CSB). I also believe that The Holy Bible is complete and nothing needs to be added or taken away for man to understand God's plan to redeem man back to Himself. Psalm 19: 7 states:

*⁷ The instruction of the LORD is perfect,
renewing one's life;
the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy,
making the inexperienced wise.*

As Christians, I hope, we all believe that the Holy Bible is the true and inerrant Word of God and not just an important book! When considering the Bible do we approach it as, just another book of stories about people, places, and dates? Or maybe you read it like a catalog to help you find something that you need to add to your life, or you go to one of your favorite verses for encouragement or direction? All these things could be true and good, but I believe there is a more rewarding way to approach the Bible.

My love for Scripture and Bible study has grown greatly over the past 20 years, I believe God gives us the wisdom to understand Him in ways that are much clearer as our faith matures. ⁵ *Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God—who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly—and it will be given to him.*" James 1:5 CSB. Just as in any healthy relationship, the harder you work, the stronger and closer that relationship becomes, whether it be a relationship between a husband and wife, parent and child, or human and pet, any relationship involves work and commitment if it is going to grow. If this is true of our earthly relationships, how much more important is it for our ultimate relationship, the one between us and our Creator. My goal in this article is to hopefully help you see Bible study and our time with the Lord in a completely different way.

I would never imply that the Bible should be a puzzle to anyone, but if you are a jigsaw puzzle aficionado, you should be familiar with the gratification and pleasure of working a jigsaw puzzle. If you have never worked on a jigsaw puzzle this might sound a little strange, but if you have I hope you will see the similarities that I am going to talk about in this article. I am going to suggest that if you approach the Holy Bible and your study time as one would working a jigsaw puzzle, your study time will become more enjoyable and relative to your everyday life.

Anne D. Williams, ^a author of the book "The Jigsaw Puzzle: Piecing Together a History", ^b states that jigsaw puzzles originated in Europe during the 18th century.

a. Anne D. Williams, Professor Emerita of Economics, Bates College

b. The Jigsaw Puzzle, Piecing Together a History, Berkley Books, Nov 1, 2004

“Fulfilled Bible prophecy: The Golden Gate.”

By Chaplain Bill Oehler

How many of you know where the “Golden Gate” is? The one I am talking about is not in the San Francisco Bay; it isn't even in California. It isn't even in America! The Golden Gate I'm talking about is not the Golden Gate Bridge, of course, but the Golden Gate in the ancient wall on the CITY of Jerusalem!

The reason I want to talk to you about this gate is because the prophet Ezekiel made a prediction concerning the gate. As did many of the prophecies in the Bible, it caught my attention. I did some research on it, and here are my results:

- (1) First of all, the prophet says in the book of Ezekiel 44:1-3, “Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the East; and it was shut.
- (2) Then said the Lord unto me; ‘This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.
- (3) It is for the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same. “

These words were written 574 years before Christ.

So the prophet says that the gate through which the Lord hath entered shall be shut, and no one will ever go through it until the Lord comes back again.

When this prophecy was written, the road from the Kidron Valley entered through this gate. The gate was in use at the time of Christ, and is thought to this very day to be the gate through which He made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. In the year 1543A.D., the walls of the city were restored by Sultan Suleiman. The road to the golden gate was no longer in use; the Sultan, seeing no more use for the gate, ordered it closed.



Now, instead of building the wall straight across the place where the gate had been, he restored the gate with its arches and ornament; and then he walled up the gate's openings themselves. (Do you see how the Lord works through people?)

*Kaiser Wilhelm planned to take Jerusalem and have the golden gate opened for his triumphal entry into the city. Apparently Kaiser thought he could tamper with prophecy and forcibly violate it.

PAGE 1

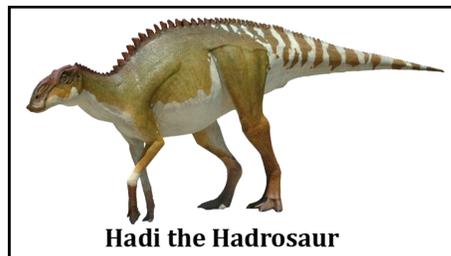
[\(Continued on page 22\)](#)

Soft Tissue Found In Dinosaur Bones

Eric J. Norman, PH. D. (Biochemistry)

The protein collagen has been confirmed to be present in a dinosaur (Hadrosaur) presumed to be 80 million years old and was published in *Science*, 1 May 2009, vol 324 by Mary Schweitzer and co-workers. The structure was confirmed by mass spectrometry at Harvard University matching at least seven synthetic peptides to the dinosaur peptides and would hold up in a court of law as mass spectrometry is used to confirm drug abuse.

The collagen molecule is composed of three helically intertwined alpha chains each about 1000 amino acids joined by peptide bonds. The peptide bond has an average half-life of 7 years at intracellular conditions. David L. Nelson and Michael M. Cox, *Lehninger Principles of Biochemistry*, fourth edition, 2005, page 86.



It has been estimated that the rate of a chemical reaction will decrease by one half for every drop of 10 degrees. Assuming an average temperature of 28 F, all collagen bonds should be gone in about 8000 years. "In temperate environments, collagen is extensively hydrolyzed in less than 1000 to 10,000 years." JD Bada, *Ann Rev Earth Planet*, 1985.

The second law of thermodynamics affirms that systems tend to go into states of greater disorganization, wind down, slow down and decay. Albert Einstein (1909) stated, "It (the second law of thermodynamics) is the only physical theory of universal content which I am convinced will never be overthrown within the framework of applicability of its base concepts." To believe that collagen could exist in a dinosaur bone 80 million years old would violate this law. "If your theory is found to be against the second law of thermodynamics I can give you no hope; there is nothing for it but to collapse in deepest humiliation." Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (1915) Chapter 4.



Understanding the Christian Concept of Redemption

By Bob Bernet

Twin siblings, a boy and a girl just graduated from High School. They had a very good high school career. Their father was very well respected and a very successful man. They had a great relationship with their father who spent a great deal of time with them and loved them very much. They had an older brother who was almost “the perfect child”. He was a great student, he did volunteer work, and was an athletic star.

The college the twins went to was very far away and their father wanted to do something very special for them to show them how much he loved them. The father decided to buy them a house so they would not have any housing problems for the years they were in college. He also set up a maintenance contract so the kids would never have any house issues to worry about.

The father went to the college city and found a very nice house and paid cash for it and put the title deed in the names of the two kids. They owned it free and clear. The father gave the kids a cell phone and said, “here is your present, you own this house free and clear, use it well and keep in touch”. This, of course, made life very easy on the two twins.

As time went on the twins began to talk to their father less and less, soon they were no longer listening to his advice. They wanted to “do their own thing” and be their own boss. The kids began to separate themselves from their father, which soon made them feel like something was missing in their lives. They began to try and fill the loneliness, the emptiness, with physical pleasures and things that were ungodly, like the thrill of gambling, sex, and drugs.

They began to get in debt due to their corrupt lifestyle. They didn’t know what to do because they didn’t want their father to know they were having problems. The drug dealers were aware of their plight, and their weaknesses so they made a deal with the kids. The drug dealers made a deal with the kids to pay off their debt. The drug dealers said they would move into the house and live there for free and the kids would have to serve them by doing their wash, preparing meals etc. This only brought the criminals closer to them and soon the siblings were in bigger debt to the point that soon the kids owed the drug dealers so much money the only way they could pay off the debt was to sign the house over to the drug dealers.

Meanwhile the father was heartbroken. He was trying to call his kids on the phone, writing them, sending people to talk to them. He even tried going there himself but to no avail because the kids were so ashamed, they couldn’t face their father in any way. They were completely separated from their father.

The father who loved his kids very much, was beside himself. He couldn’t stand to see his children suffer, so he agonized about what he could do to rectify the situation. Finally, the father decided the one thing he could do was to buy the house back from the drug dealers who now owned the house. The drug dealers of course were happy to make a deal with the father, so they sold the house back to the father who once again paid cash money and put the title deed back in the name of the two kids.

PAGE 1

(Continued on page 28)

EDITOR'S THOUGHTS?

By Terry Ivers

"I think the whole d... thing
is overexaggerated. . ."

Harry R Truman, March 31st 1980
The Longview Daily News

What a year so far? In this latest edition of the World By Design® Newsletter we all find ourselves preparing for our nation's Independence Day Celebration on the Fourth of July. Because of the patriotism of our forefathers, many who served and gave their lives for these United States had a strong belief and commitment for freedom. Over two hundred and 40 years later Americans are among the most prosperous and free civilizations that have ever existed. During that two hundred and forty plus years we have endured and overcome many trials and tribulations that have troubled our nation.

During the last several months we have watched and lived through a worldwide pandemic which has caused death and pain to many across the globe, especially in larger cities in the United States. We are now in the long process of restarting a virus crippled economy. Even worse than an out of control virus, now our nation is dealing with an issue that has been present in America for most of our history. The issue of racism and oppression is not an American issue, world history studies reveal that racism and oppression have been present in the human culture for at least six thousand years.

There are many different groups in America at this time in history that are demanding attention to their cause, and many have legitimate concerns, the problem is that there are also a great number of solutions being suggested to answer these concerns. If you are a Bible-believing Christian, you should have answers concerning all these issues. Most of the social issues that this country is dealing with at this present time find their answers in the Bible, the written word of God. Most if not all the answers are found in the first book of the Bible, Genesis. The western Christian church has neglected Genesis teaching for the past seventy-five or more years due to controversial subjects that arise because of so called "science". Because of this lack of scriptural Genesis teaching we no longer have Christians who understand or proclaim a foundational Gospel message. Creation, Research, Science, Education Foundation is committed to providing readers with Biblical scientific information that allows strong foundational Gospel oriented answers.

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9 (ESV)

God Bless America!
Terry Ivers

The articles in the World By Design Newsletter will be supplied by CRSEF board members as well as information that we will pass on from other leading Creation Ministries.

We welcome your questions and concerns and ask that you send us information and articles that you would want us to share in upcoming issues of the World By Design Newsletter. Thank you for your interest and involvement in CRSEF and we look forward to hearing from you, we may be contacted at editor_wbdnewsletter@twc.com or rlmoak@fuse.net.



CRSEF Monthly Program Schedule

CRSEF's monthly presentations are given at a public library or a local church on the third Thursday of each month. All presentations are planned to run from 7-7:45 PM followed by a 15 minute, or longer, Q&A time.

CRSEF Monthly Program for July Thursday, July 16th 2020

Thursday, 7/16/2020 - From 7-7:45 PM followed by a 15 minute, Q&A time

The Heavens Declare is a 12-part documentary showcasing compelling evidence for a universe created by God just a few thousand years ago. Experts in astronomy, astrophysics, and cosmology build their case for a biblical worldview.

Episode 2 is titled "Challenges to the Big Bang"

Main points include:

- How do the laws of physics contradict the Big Bang?
- Challenges in antimatter and the "horizon" problem
- How the Big Bang does not adequately explain galaxy formation
- Why the biblical model works better with the evidence

Presenter: Bob Moak of CRSEF will field questions after the video

Location: Sharonville Public Library

Directions: [Get Map and Directions](#)

Website: [Visit Website](#)



Click DVD for trailer

CRSEF Monthly Program for August Thursday August 20th 2020

Thursday, 8/20/2020 - From 7-7:45 PM followed by a 15 minute, Q&A time

The Heavens Declare is a 12-part documentary showcasing compelling evidence for a universe created by God just a few thousand years ago. Experts in astronomy, astrophysics, and cosmology build their case for a biblical worldview.

Episode 3 is titled "The Starlight Travel Dilemma"

Main points include:

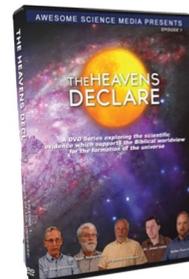
- How one's worldview shapes your ideas about the data?
- What are the two main worldviews and their implications?
- How the laws of nature are compelling proof for creation?
- Why using the Big Bang presents big challenges

Presenter: Bob Moak of CRSEF will field questions after the video

Location: North Central Public Library

Directions: [Get Map and Directions](#)

Website: [Visit Website](#)



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CRSEF

Monthly Program Schedule

CRSEF's monthly presentations are given at a public library or a local church on the third Thursday of each month. All presentations are planned to run from 7-7:45 PM followed by a 15 minute, or longer, Q&A time.

CRSEF Monthly Program for September Thursday, September 17th 2020

Thursday 9/17/2020 - From 7-7:45 PM followed by a 15 minute, Q&A time

The Heavens Declare is a 12-part documentary showcasing compelling evidence for a universe created by God just a few thousand years ago. Experts in astronomy, astrophysics, and cosmology build their case for a biblical worldview.

Episode 4 – “Our Amazing Solar System”

This episode explores the amazing solar system we live in, designed by God in just a few days.

Our experts will explore:

- How our solar system looks designed by God
- What makes each planet unique
- Why the Earth is so special among planets in our vast universe
- Evidence of our solar system being just thousands of years old

DVD: 42 minutes

Presenter: Bob Moak of CRSEF will field questions after the video

Location: Brecon United Methodist Church

Directions: [Get Map and Directions](#)



Click DVD for trailer

CRSEF Monthly Program for October Thursday, October 15th 2020

Thursday, 10/15/2020 - From 7-7:45 PM followed by a 15 minute, Q&A time

The Heavens Declare is a 12-part documentary showcasing compelling evidence for a universe created by God just a few thousand years ago. Experts in astronomy, astrophysics, and cosmology build their case for a biblical worldview.

Episode 5 – “Our Incredible Sun”

This episode explores the incredible sun God created on the Fourth Day of Creation.

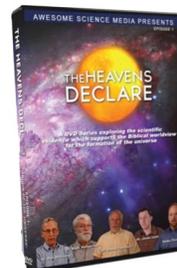
Our experts will explore:

- How our sun formed and its purpose in Creation
- What makes our sun unique from other stars
- The science of the sun, flares, sunspots, and fusion
- The future of our sun

Presenter: Bob Moak of CRSEF will field questions after the video

Location: Brecon United Methodist Church

Directions: [Get Map and Directions](#)



Click DVD for trailer

Whole Bible (Continued)

For the sake of writing each of these theories here, it seems better to instead spend the words on just trying to convince you that God has not deceived us by allowing a distorted story of creation to be the start of His Word!

A key belief in an old earth requires you to believe that there was no worldwide flood, as written about in Genesis. The old earth believers believe in a uniformitarian formation of the strata layers found on the earth. Darwinian evolution is believed to be backed up by this long timeframe ordering of these layers, and that they show evolution in action. However, the first problem is that these layers were formed by water, as they are made up of sedimentary rock which is formed by flooding, as the main component. The second big problem is that to date no fossil has been discovered that is an undisputed missing link, which would indicate evolution ever occurred. The thing about these evolutionary missing links is that they are referred to as “missing.”

Evidence for catastrophic formation of the strata layers:

The strata layers show evidence of a catastrophic formation not, a uniform formation as is required for a long-age formation. Most of the layers contain fossils of both land and marine animals fossilized together, which indicates a very catastrophic formation. The strata record supports real evidence of a worldwide flood, as described in the Bible in the book of Genesis!

These marine fossils also indicate a catastrophic formation by the fact that they were buried while still alive. This can be seen by just viewing them and seeing that the shelled versions are complete, the shells are closed, and the remains of the animal are still contained in its shell. Some fossils have been found that show one fish is swallowing another fish, and they were fossilized together. Complete jellyfish have been found fossilized, and this could not occur unless it was buried immediately to preserve it! An ichthyosaur was fossilized giving birth. In this spectacular case, not only is the fossil exquisitely preserved, but the fact that mother *ichthyosaur* and infant are 'trapped' in a not-yet-completed birth process makes it profoundly clear that both were rapidly overwhelmed by a catastrophic burial, consistent with the worldwide flood of Noah's day. It is, of course, not feasible that the mother just lay on the bottom of the ocean floor giving birth for thousands of years while being slowly covered by accumulating sediments!

I believe the earth is about 6,000 years old:

The first question one must answer is how did the timeframe of 6,000 years come about? It is calculated by using the Bible and the genealogies given in the Bible, and then, calculating backward to arrive at the year of creation. Many people have tried to do this, and many have calculated the timeframe to be around 6,000 years. Many Young Earth Creationists prefer the calculations performed by Archbishop James Ussher, which predicted the year of creation to be 4004 BC. To use this method, you could calculate the age of the earth by adding 4004 and the current year and the result would be the approximate the age of the earth, i.e., in 2020, the age of the earth would 6,024 years.

[PAGE 1](#)

[\(Continued on page 11 \)](#)

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Whole Bible (Continued)

As a YEC I prefer to give an accurate age for the earth, because if you ask a devout evolutionist how old they believe the earth is **they will currently answer** 4.6 billion years. If their faith is strong enough to believe this age, then YEC's should also have a faith strong enough to believe it is 6,024 years old! Notice I wrote "they will currently answer" 4.6 billion years, as not long ago they believed it was less than this age because they have adjusted this perceived age many times over the years.

When Jesus walked the earth as the God/man, He expressed a belief in the six-day creation, as He quoted Genesis 1:27 and Mark recorded it for us. ***But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'*** (Mark 10:6). If what Jesus said here is true, that Adam and Eve were male and female from the beginning, then this disproves evolution and makes it a lie. If what Jesus said was wrong, then we would have a difficult time believing that Jesus is truly the God/man! If what Jesus said here is not true, then He was either confused about the details on creation, or worse, Jesus was a liar!

The Ten Commandments also support the six-day creation, as the 4th commandment states that the earth was created in six days. *"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.* (Exodus 20:8-11)

I believe the earth is more than 6,000 years old, but the age is not that important!

Some people have told me that they believe that the earth is older than about 6,000 years, but they do not believe that it is millions or billions of years old! When someone says something like this, they are just not willing to accept anyone's ideology of how to calculate the age of the earth. This type of feeling is the most dangerous, of all, as it presents the belief that they know more than any researchers or philosophers. **They are unwilling to accept any evidence from either the Bible** or from any humanist endeavors to research the question of the age of the earth! Such people do not want to commit to any existing belief system, which allows them the freedom to dismiss the whole age the earth question because they do not think it is an important issue anyway.

From a Biblical perspective, why is the age of the earth important:

If you read the Bible's account of creation as written, there is no way you could come up with billions of years for its age. If you believe the earth was created by God from nothing, and if you can accept that the account related to the creation of mankind, as is written in the Bible, then as Jesus has said there can be no time available for evolution to occur. Jesus told His disciples that He read the account written in the Old Testament about creation, and He believed it!

[PAGE 1](#)

[\(Continued on page 12\)](#)

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Whole Bible (Continued)

If members of mankind were created “In the beginning,” as “male and female” then there is no time for millions of years required for evolution to occur on this earth.

If the Fall of Man did not occur as recorded in the Bible, then there is no reason for a Savior to save mankind from their sins. And the shedding of blood would not be the requirement for forgiveness of sins. Christ’s death on the cross would not accomplish any forgiveness to occur! If animals were dying for millions of years before mankind was created then the Fall of Man did not bring death and suffering into the world, and thus, there could be no requirement for a Savior to save our immortal souls when we die in the mortal cursed world.

The Veil over the Nations:

On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. (Isaiah 25:6-8)

Many people feel that every nation should be encouraged simply to practice its own religion. God’s Word, however, makes it plain that all nations are blinded, cut off from the truth by a deadly covering. This is true of the Jews, for “even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart” (2 Corinthians 3:15). It is also true of the Gentiles, who have “the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Ephesians 4:18).

The veil that keeps them in such darkness is a Satanic blindfold. “The god of this world [i.e., Satan] has blinded the minds of unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 4:4). And how did the devil ever gain such control over human minds? “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened....Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator.” (Romans 1:21, 25).

So today men and women almost everywhere—atheists, Communists, humanists, Buddhists, Confucianists, animists, Hindus, Taoists, Shintoists, occultists, “New Agers,” **and even the “liberals” in the monotheistic religions (Judaism, Islam, Christianity)**—really all believe and practice the same religion, rejecting God as Creator and **worshipping instead some man or woman exalting evolutionary philosophy.**

Someday, God will destroy this pervasive veil over the nations. In the meantime, we must reach everyone we can with the true and everlasting gospel of Christ, for that “vail is done away in Christ” (2 Corinthians 3:14).

Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, “So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’” And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. (Hebrews 4:3)

[PAGE 1](#)[\(Continued on page 13\)](#)

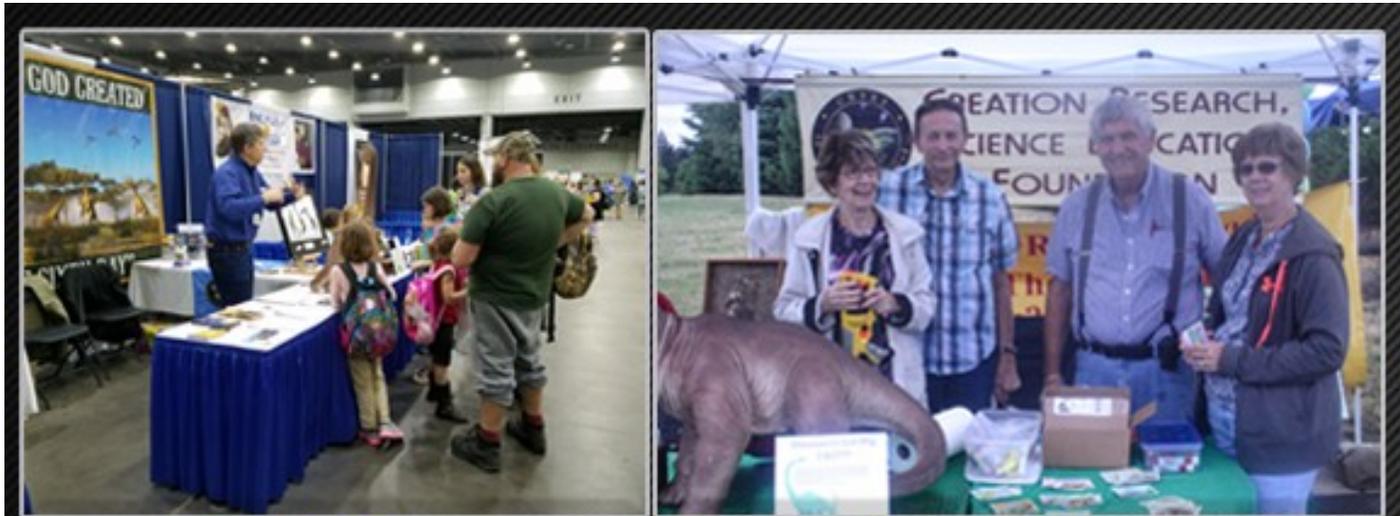
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Whole Bible (Continued)

Here is a strong New Testament confirmation of the Genesis record of a creation completed in the past—thus not continuing in the present as theistic evolutionists have to assume. Whatever processes God may have used during the six days of creation, they are no longer in operation, for the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.” (Genesis 2:1-3).

The record in Genesis could not be more clear and specific, but **the fact that it is in Genesis tends to demean it in the minds of many scientists and theologians.** So, they prefer to believe in a continuing evolution and long ages in the past. But the writer of Hebrews once again confirms the fact of a completed creation: for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. (Hebrews 4:10).

The writer is not trying to defend the completed creation as such but merely assuming it as a commonly acknowledged truth. In fact, God’s “rest” from His works of creation is taken as a prophetic type of the spiritual rest of a Christian believer when he ceases trusting his own works of legalism and relies fully on the finished work of Christ for his eternal salvation. On the cross, before the Lord had died for our sins, He had cried out, “It is finished” (John 19:30), and our debt for sin was fully paid. God’s great work of redemption was completed, just as was His work of creation, and now we also can rest from our dead works, “so that we may serve the living God!” (Hebrews 9:14).



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PAGE 1

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Biblical Adam (Continued)

Paul played a pivotal role in the sharing of Christ's message in the earliest days of the faith. While Paul was still blind in Damascus, the Lord appeared to "*a certain disciple*" named Ananias with instructions to go to Paul to lay hands on him for healing and to baptize him. Following a meeting with other disciples in Damascus, Paul "*began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying 'He is the Son of God'*" (Acts 9:20). Thus Paul began to fulfill the promise of Jesus that "*he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel*" (Acts 9:15).

The World of Paul

At the dawn of the first century, the known world was ruled by Rome. The Roman Empire struggled with problems of violent coups, assassinations, uncontrollable ambition of its leaders, civil war, class struggles, riots among the disgruntled and conquered peoples—at times, utter chaos. Paul's life as an apostle reflects some of the harshness of the times: rigid obedience to the emperor and a time of slaves, of poets and peasants, insurrections, and, of course, religious upheaval.

But from those troubled times, the Roman Empire would emerge stronger than ever before. Soon it would stretch from Britain, across Europe to the shores of North Africa, and from Spain across Greece and the Middle East, to the borders of Asia. It would embrace hundreds of languages and religions and provide a history and culture in which western civilization would grow. Rome would become the world's first and most enduring superpower.

In his blog post "*Chronology of Apostle Paul's Journeys and Epistles*," Matthew McGee writes, "An understanding of the chronological order of events in Paul's ministry can be very valuable as a tool for the study of Acts and Paul's epistles. The book of Acts and the epistles of Paul sometimes tell us the length of time between one event and another. However, determining the year in which an event took place can require some research. It is most helpful to know the year of the beginning or end of the reigns of political rulers that are mentioned in the text."

In 31 BC the nephew of Julius Caesar, under the name of Augustus Caesar, became the first official emperor of Rome. Augustus once said, "I found Rome a city of clay but left it a city of marble." He ruled the empire until AD 14 and reformed its laws, secured its borders, and initiated vast building projects. It was during Augustus's reign that Jesus Christ was born, about 4 BC (Luke 2:1).



[PAGE 1](#)

[\(Continued on page 15\)](#)

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Biblical Adam (Continued)

The table below summarizes the more helpful dates of events, important places, and figures in the first century that give a fuller understanding of the world in which Paul lived.

AD 14 Death of Augustus	AD 44 Judea annexed as a Roman province
AD 14 Tiberius becomes emperor of Rome	AD 47 Claudius celebrates Rome's 800th birthday with games
AD 26 Pontius Pilate appointed prefect of Judea	AD 49 Claudius's edict expelling all Jews from Rome
AD 28 John the Baptist executed by Herod Antipas	AD 54 Death and deification of Claudius
AD 29 Death of Jesus Christ	AD 54 Nero ascends the throne
AD 34 (estimate) Martyrdom of Steven	AD 60 Porcius Festus becomes procurator of Judea
AD 37 Death of Tiberius Caesar	AD 64 Rome on fire, Nero suspected; Christians persecuted
AD 37 Caligula becomes Roman emperor	AD 67-68 Death of Paul
AD 37 (estimate) Saul's conversion	AD 68 Widespread revolt; Nero commits suicide
AD 40 Caligula's statue erected in temple	AD 68-69 The year of the four emperors
AD 41 Caligula assassinated	AD 69 Vespasian proclaimed emperor; end of civil wars
AD 41 Claudius Caesar begins reign	AD 73 Final Jewish stronghold, Masada, captured by Romans
AD 43 Claudius begins first large-scale invasion of Britain	AD 79 Mt. Vesuvius erupts, burying city of Pompeii
AD 44 (estimate) Believers first called Christians (Acts 11)	
AD 44 Death of Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:20-23)	

Beginning at Jerusalem

Acts 1:4-9 records some of Jesus' final instructions to His apostles. The Great Commission given by our Lord, recorded in Matthew 28, was to commence in Jerusalem, but disciples were to wait for the Holy Spirit before embarking on their sacred assignment of teaching the gospel. The success of Peter's preaching on Pentecost was overwhelming: "*And there were added that day about three thousand souls*" (Acts 2:41).

The early church, divinely commissioned by Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit, was to be implemented by the apostles and other disciples. *“Although Acts treats only two persons, Peter and Paul, as chief characters, it mentions a number of persons of second rank, as John, James, Stephen, Phillip, Barnabas, James, Apollos, and a larger number of personages of a third degree of importance”* (Henry C. Thiessen). The biblical narratives also mention a number of notable Roman officials, including Sergius Paulus, Gallio, Claudius Lysias, Felix, Festus, Herod Agrippa I and II, and Julius.

The early chapters of book of Acts tell of the bold and inspired teachings of the disciples of Christ beginning from Jerusalem. The apostle Peter continued his preaching with great success: *“But many of those who heard the message, believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand”* (Acts 4:4). Despite persecutions, arrests, and even death, the young champions of the faith continued to fulfill Jesus’ Great Commission. Constrained by space here, we cannot do justice in relating even a small number of the adventures of the disciples and the growth of the church as recorded in Acts 5–10. In order to achieve our goal of following the apostle Paul from Jerusalem to Athens, we must fast-forward to pick up the biblical narrative in Acts 15.

Paul’s Circuitous Route from Jerusalem to Athens

In AD 69, after his first missionary journey, Paul traveled to Jerusalem to meet with *“the apostles and elders”* concerning the matter of circumcision (Acts 15:1–2). Some Jewish Christians were demanding that the law of Moses be carried out before a Gentile could become a Christian. The elders of the church in Jerusalem, and the apostles, including Peter, were present at the meeting. *“And after there had been much debate,”* Peter addressed the assembly (Acts 15:7). Hearing also from Paul and Barnabas, as well as from James, the brethren concluded that *“we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles”* (Acts 15:19). The result of their conference was that the Gentiles would not be required to submit to circumcision before becoming Christians.

Having come to this decision and agreement, *“the apostles and the elders with the whole church”* sent a letter with their decision in care of Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and *“leading men among the brethren”* to be delivered to the church at Antioch (Acts 15:22). The congregation at Antioch not only received the letter, but *“when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement”* (Acts 15:31).

Paul and Barnabas, with some others, remained at Antioch for a season, teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord. Paul and Barnabas then determined to return to the cities where they preached the gospel on their first missionary journey, to see how they were. At this time it was decided, after some disagreement, that Barnabas would take Mark with him and sail to Cyprus, but Paul would take Silas *“traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening to churches”* (Acts 15:41). Thus, Paul began his second missionary journey around AD 51.

The Path of Paul

Paul and Silas began their tour of the churches in Derbe and Lystra, where they also enlisted a new disciple, Timothy. *“So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily”* (Acts 16:5).

[PAGE 1](#)

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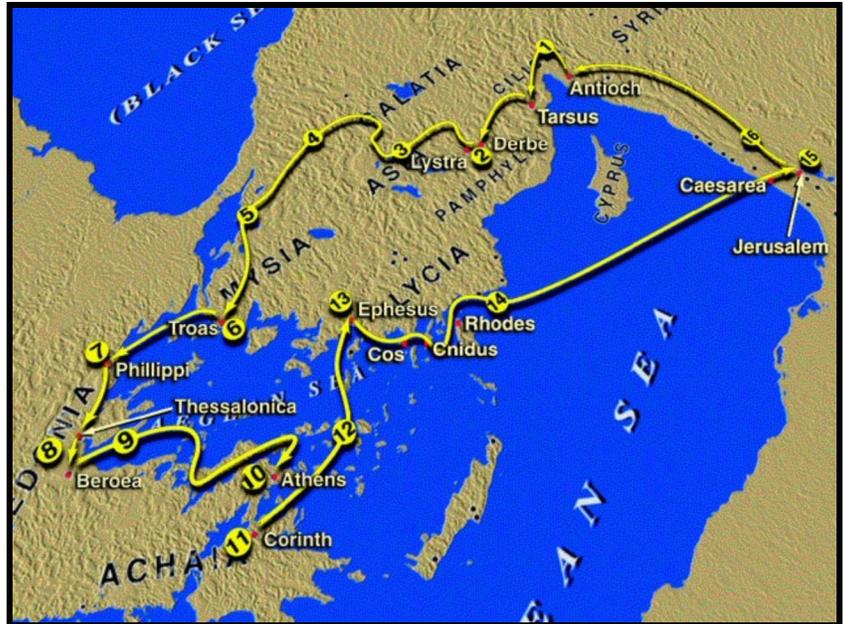
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Biblical Adam (Continued)

The trio continued on their missionary tour and eventually came to Troas, where they were called by God to preach the gospel in Macedonia (Acts 16:10). Paul's continuing adventures in Neapolis and Philippi are recorded in the Acts 16:11–15. The conversion of a prominent woman, Lydia, and her household marked another success in the apostle's campaign. Further, the Philippian jailer and his household were also baptized after the miraculous release of Paul and Silas from their confinement and after *"they spoke the word of the Lord to him"* (Acts 16:16–34).

Passing through Amphipolis and Appolonia, Paul and his companions came to Thessalonica, where Paul taught for three weeks, and where he was successful in gathering *"a great multitude of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women"* (Acts 17:1–4). Still, they met with great resistance and physical threats from others (Acts 17:5–9), to the point where their enemies could say, *"These men who have upset the world have come here also"* (Acts 17:6).

Paul escaped to Berea. *"The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so"* (Acts 17:10–11).



After teaching in Berea and gaining more believers, Paul departed ahead of Silas and Timothy southward into Achaia (southern Greece) to Athens (Acts 17:14–15), possibly for the winter of AD 51–52.

As Paul sailed from Berea to Athens, perhaps he thought that he would be impressed, like any tourist, by this famous and historic city, once one of the most glorious and renowned cities in the world. But he was only impressed, and distressed, by the magnitude of the idolatry he saw all around.

Paul in Athens

Finally, we arrive at the geographic and topical center of this study of Paul in the book of Acts. Athens, one of the oldest cities in the world, has been continuously occupied for at least the last three thousand years. Athens was named after the Greek goddess Athena (or as the Romans called her, Minerva), in Greek mythology the goddess of war, wisdom, law, justice, mathematics, philosophy, science, and more. The city also was home to Socrates, Demosthenes, and Plato. It could be argued that Athens was a key point of the foundation of western civilization.

It is said that Athens had more idols or images than all the rest of Greece combined. One ancient writer declared that at this time there were thirty thousand gods in Athens! Petronius (AD 27–66) said satirically that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens. Xenophon (431–354 BC) called the city one great altar, one great offering to the gods

Paul knew well the reputation of Athens, but he could not have realized, until he saw it, the extent to which it was given to idolatry. *“Now while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols”* (Acts 17:16).

David Guzik, in his commentary at EnduringWord.com, describes the scene like this: *“The sense is that Paul would have preferred to wait until Timothy and Silas came from Berea before he began his ministry in Athens, but when he saw that the city was given over to idols he was compelled to preach the gospel immediately.”* The meaning of *“full of idols”* is really “under idols” or “swamped by idols.” Paul saw the beauty of Athens, having the best that Greek sculptors and architects could offer, but all of that beauty did not honor the only true God.

Paul’s Three Pulpits

Paul’s practice was to preach and reason with people wherever he could get an audience, but he always went first to the Jews in any location. The apostle’s first stop in Athens was *“in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles”* (Acts 17:17a). Next, he spoke in the Agora, the city’s large gathering place: *“And in the market place every day with those who happened to be present”* (Acts 17:17b).

Paul faced a challenging audience in Athens, a cultured, educated city proud of its history and an intellectual center, rich in the arts and philosophical thought. Paul spoke to a city perhaps different than any other city he had ever preached in before. *“And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him”* (Acts 17:18).

THE EPICUREANS

The philosophy of Epicurus (341–270 BC) was a devotion to pleasure, comfort, and high living with a certain nicety of style. This system of belief held that the external world is a series of fortuitous combinations of particles and that the greatest good is to seek “prudent gratification” of passion and prosperity. All of this is practiced in order to attain a state of tranquility and freedom from fear. Epicurus himself argued for moderation in all things.

The followers of Epicurus sought to indulge in the pleasures of life whenever possible. Epicureans encouraged the avoidance of pain and believed that too much culture and civilization could disturb one’s peace of mind, except insofar as knowledge could help rid oneself of religious fears. Epicureans did not deny the existence of “the gods” but denied their involvement in the world, both in human lives and the universe in any way. Basically, their motto was “Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.”

THE STOICS

Zeno of Citium (about 336–265 BC) was the founder of the Stoic school of philosophy in Athens. He taught that universal reason was the greatest good in life and that living in accordance with reason was the purpose of humankind. It is alleged that Zeno once said, “I made a prosperous voyage when I was shipwrecked,” meaning that prior to his coming to Athens his life had no meaning.

In Stoicism, there are no angels, no demons, no promise or threat of what lies beyond the grave. Stoics believed that nature has instilled people with the capacity to reason, and they viewed the mentally handicapped as defective. They laid great emphasis on self-sufficiency and “right reason,” irreducible elements of the material and governed by fate. Stoics believed that “fated causality” or duty restricts man to choose only those acts which are in accord with nature. They believed that all other acts, both sorrows and pleasures, are a matter of indifference. They prided themselves on their ability to take whatever came.

In theology, Stoics were essentially pantheistic. That is, they believed that everything is “god,” and that “god” was regarded as impersonal. Stoics commended suicide as an honorable means of escape from a life that could no longer be sustained with dignity. It was reported that Zeno himself took his own life.

It was the novelty of Paul’s message that earned him the invitation to the Areopagus. The ancient Greeks loved a constant and always-changing stream of news and information. They also delighted in a good debate, so they invited Paul to tell the assembled crowd about this new teaching. *“Some were saying, ‘What would this idle babbler wish to say?’ Others, ‘He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities’—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, ‘May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?’”* (Acts 17:18–19).

F. F. Bruce wrote, “The Stoics and Epicureans alike, much as they differed from each other, agreed at least on this—that the new-fangled message brought by this Jew of Tarsus was not one that could appeal to reasonable people. They looked on him a retailer of secondhand scraps of philosophy, or a picker-up of learning’s crumbs.”

The Areopagus was a hill near the Acropolis that rose some 377 feet above the land below, later named Mars Hill by the Romans. There, Greek philosophers debated while crowds gathered to enjoy the intellectual jousting. The Athenian council, or Areopagus court, also met there. Not only did the council render judgments on various legal matters, but on religious and moral issues as well. Paul was brought there, “not to stand trial in a forensic sense, nor yet to be examined with a view to being licensed as a public lecturer, but simply to have an opportunity of expounding his teaching before experts” (F. F. Bruce).

Paul’s Sermon at Mars Hill

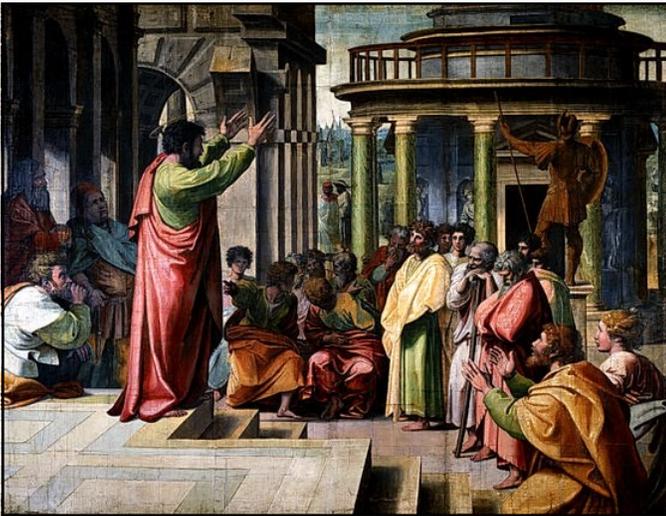
The apostle Paul’s sermon at the Areopagus (Acts 17:22–31) is the most classical example in the New Testament of his preaching to Gentiles. These ten verses record one of the most celebrated discourses in the Bible. At AmericanRhetoric.com, an online speech bank, Paul’s address to the Athenians appears in its entirety. And in Athens to this day there is a bronze plaque engraved in the Greek language with the full text of Paul’s speech on Mars Hill.

Standing in the midst of the Areopagus, Paul said:

Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD." What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He served with human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; and He made from one every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, "For we also are His offspring." Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.

Studying Paul's Words

In contemplating the apostle's address to the Athenians, it is well to study Paul's words completely since there are so few of them and to think about what they mean.



We must first conclude that Paul wanted his hearers to come to a correct understanding of who God is. From his observation of their altar to an "Unknown God," Paul began to teach the Athenians about the one true God, the Creator of the universe. The real God is in need of nothing made from human hands, nor does He live in a physical place on earth. J. W. McGarvey wrote, "Doubtless, Paul had allusion to the magnificent marble temples which were in sight all around him, and especially to the Parthenon, the glory of Greek architecture, which towered above the Areopagus."

Further, this God, the only deity to whom Paul refers, is not served by human hands, as though He needs something which men could supply, seeing that He is the ultimate source, from whom men receive their life, their breath, and all they enjoy.

Next, Paul shows that this God, instead of being the God of some single nation, actually created every nation and made them all from one man. As McGarvey says, "Finally, he shows them that the purpose of God in all these things was to direct men to obtain the very knowledge of Himself which Paul was now trying to impart to his hearers."

Biblical Adam (Continued)

Moreover, Paul taught that the one and only true God “*made from one every nation of mankind.*” The actual Greek word here is *henos*, or literally “one.” Wayne Jackson, writing for *The Christian Courier*, notes, “Of special interest here is the expression “*of one.*” It translates the Greek *ex henos*, literally ‘out of one male,’—*henos* being a masculine form. The allusion is obviously to the Genesis record and our ancestry in Adam.”

Some English translations render *henos* in this verse as “one blood,” and in some Bibles is a note indicating that “one blood” is seen in later manuscripts. But “one man” is the appropriate translation in this passage and does not allow for other new or popular renderings such as “one source,” “from one forefather,” “starting from scratch,” “one ancestor,” “one stock,” or “from one original person.” Here it is clear and unambiguous that this “*one*” refers to the first man, Adam.

Paul in no uncertain terms tells his audience that God is the Creator of the world and that from the one came all humankind. “Paul next explains that all of mankind is descended from one man whom God created. He is, of course, talking about Adam, but he doesn’t mention his name here. From this one man, God determined the nations’ time periods and geographical boundaries. In other words, God has been completely sovereign over human history” (Bill Pratt, blog post, “Commentary on Acts 17” at ToughQuestionsAnswered.org).

Paul wanted his hearers to understand the truth is there is but one God, the true and only God who created all things and can be known because “*He is not far from each one of us.*” It was this God who created from one individual man all humankind and nations. The Greeks entertained an attitude of ethnic exclusiveness—all others were barbarians. The apostle’s presentation undermined this ideology because their unfounded ethnic distinctions were to be obliterated in Christ. The family of man is one.

Conclusion

David Guzik, previously cited, observes that Paul went from knowing who God is (our Creator), to who we are (His offspring), to our responsibility before Him (to understand Him and worship Him in truth), to our accountability if we dishonor Him (judgment). Paul’s message to the philosophers on Mars Hill that day ended with a call to repentance and acceptance of two fundamental truths: the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The last three verses of Acts 17 are not part of Paul’s speech but come from the inspired account of Luke, the physician: “*Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, ‘We shall hear you again concerning this.’ So Paul went out of their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.*”

In reality, Paul was just beginning his sermon that day on Mars Hill. Certainly he wanted to talk about Jesus, His ministry, and Paul’s own conversion. But as soon as Paul mentioned the resurrection, he was stopped short. Paul’s success at Athens was disappointing compared to new disciples gained at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, but there were new followers of Christ gained that day in Athens, and Paul was fulfilling his ministry as apostle to the Gentiles!

PAGE 1

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In 1914 World War I was waged upon Europe by Germany. Great Britain and France were holding on by their thumbnails and pleading with the United States to get involved, fearing the worst. Germany was the dominant force, both on land and on the sea. On the sea, the U boats, a formidable war machine for its time, were ravaging commercial shipping lanes and preventing badly needed supplies from reaching the European shores to resupply the war resistance efforts. The pleading for help continued, but fell on the deaf ears of then President Woodrow Wilson, who had promised the American people continued neutrality, although a steady stream of supplies were being shipped to the war effort. The problem was the U boat. In 1915, 868,000 tons of cargo was lost to these dreaded underwater assassins; in 1916, 1,236,000 tons; in February of 1917 alone, 532,000 tons of cargo were sunk; in March 599,000 tons; and in April 969,000 tons.

In April of 1917, America entered the war. Early in 1918 it was a desperate picture. Germany's strength was enormous! Britain and France were badly beaten and depleted of supplies. The United States, though officially committed to the war effort, was largely uninvolved and merely gearing up to entering the European theater.

More bad news: Russia was totally annihilated on the Eastern front. The Battle of Tannenberg, engineered by General Von Hindenberg. Whole White Russian army sucked into a trap in a swamp. Surrounded by German artillery, they killed a million Russian soldiers. The Russians sued for peace. The Russian Red army took over and brought about the Bolshevik Revolution and the birth of the Soviet Union. This freed up 1,000,000 men on the Eastern front to be transferred to the West. Kaiser Wilhelm was literally licking his chops. He would plan his triumphant entry into Europe through the very Golden Gate which was supposedly closed and awaiting the return of Christ!

And now witness the hand of God preserving His unalterable truth. U.S. Admiral William Sims, told by British Admiral Lord Jellicoe, "Plan on losing half of what you send over here, including men. If you want a million man army, send two million. By November of 1918, 2,000,000 Doughboys, who some still say today, pound for pound, the best fighting men ever sent to war were already in France and 10,000 a day were arriving. United States convoys were sweeping the U boats out of the North Atlantic. To date, 11,153,000 tons of cargo had been lost to enemy subs, but not one single ton of cargo was lost to the subs during this mass movement of men and machines. A total of 2,079,880 men were transported without a single casualty lost to the U boats. The tide turned, Germany was overwhelmed, and the Golden Gate remains closed, awaiting the Christ of Prophecy!

Note: Numbers 31:49; No soldiers lost. (Because it was God's war.)

Many of you, like me, have marveled at the mighty work of God fulfilling His promise to bring Israel out of bondage in Egypt and wish somehow we could have spoken to some of the men at that time and got personal stories of what it was like to be there. Yet, I tell you here was an example which rivals that miracle, and your country took part!

Many of you sitting here may have parents or grandparents still alive who were an actual tool in the hand of the Almighty to preserve this immutable prophecy to which every one of us will one day be a witness! More to follow.

The Bible (Continued)

Mostly cut from wood in the beginning, they were a source of teaching geography to children, with maps being a common theme for most puzzles. The popularity of jigsaw puzzles grew as the printing and manufacturing processes made them more attractive and cheaper to produce. Jigsaw puzzles reached their climax in popularity in the 1930s during the Great Depression when most people were out of work. Due to the Worldwide Covid 19 Pandemic, puzzles are hard to find, leading jigsaw puzzle manufacturers are struggling to keep up with the demand, with some even selling out completely.

Today you can find jigsaw puzzles that promote many different subjects, they are used for product promotion, art, travel as well as still being used for education and leisure purposes. According to the Market Watch Website, published December 14th, 2018,^c the global jigsaw puzzle market size was valued at 9.1 billion USD in 2017. The article also stated that the older generation is increasingly purchasing jigsaw puzzles in a bid to reintroduce them to the younger population in the era of internet and digital games. The fore-mentioned 9.1 Billion dollar market share shows us that many people who enjoy working jigsaw puzzles, but they are all not just working jigsaw puzzles for enjoyment and fun.

An article published on the Brandpoint Content Website,^d posted, August 21st, 2018, titled "7 Surprising Benefits To Doing Jigsaw Puzzles" listing these 7 things that can be a by-product of jigsaw puzzle working.

1. Jigsaw puzzles exercise the left and right sides of your brain at once

Your left brain is logical and works using a linear fashion, while your right side of the brain is creative and intuitive. When you're doing a jigsaw puzzle, both sides are engaged, according to Sanesco Health, an industry leader in neurotransmitter testing. Think of it as a mental workout that improves your problem-solving skills and attention span. It's no surprise that Bill Gates admits to being an avid puzzler.

2. Jigsaw puzzles improve your short-term memory

Can't remember what you had for lunch yesterday? Jigsaw puzzles can help with that. Doing a puzzle reinforces connections between brain cells, improves mental speed and, is an especially effective way to improve short-term memory.

3. Jigsaw puzzles improve your visual-spatial reasoning

When you do a jigsaw puzzle you need to look at individual pieces and figure out where they'll fit into the big picture. If you do it regularly, you'll improve visual-spatial reasoning, which helps with driving a car, packing, using a map, learning and following dance moves, and a whole host of other things.

c. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/miscellaneous/the-puzzle-in-the-pieces/articleshow/66662820.cms>
d. <https://www.brandpointcontent.com/article/33202/7-surprising-benefits-of-doing-jigsaw-puzzles>

The Bible (Continued)

4. Jigsaw puzzles are a great meditation tool and stress reliever

Focusing on one image for a long time, without extraneous thoughts entering your mind, is in itself meditation. By doing a jigsaw puzzle you're getting the same benefits as if you meditated. The stress of everyday life evaporates and is replaced by a sense of peace and tranquility that lowers blood pressure and heart rate.

5. Jigsaw puzzles are a great way to connect with family

Starting a jigsaw puzzle and keeping it on a table in your living room or kitchen is an invitation for the whole family to participate, whenever they have a few minutes to sit down and focus. It's a tactic that parents of teens can use for starting a conversation while working toward a shared goal.

6. Conversely, jigsaw puzzles are great for some needed alone time

Puzzling is perfect for people who want a quiet, solo break from the bustle and unrelenting stimulus of today's digital lifestyle.

7. You'll live longer, better if you puzzle regularly

Studies show that people who do jigsaw and crossword puzzles have longer life spans with less chance of developing Alzheimer's disease, memory loss or, dementia. Puzzling stimulates the brain and wards off the plaque that is the marker of Alzheimer's, according to a recent study published in the Archives of Neurology. The study compared brain scans of 75-year-olds to 25-year-olds. The elderly people that did puzzles regularly had brain scans comparable to the 25-year-olds.

When we think of the Holy Bible and our everyday lives it is important to understand that scripture itself reveals the importance of our study time to our physical as well as our spiritual wellbeing. The following are only some of the scriptures that teach us the importance of Bible study.

1. Sanctification

² Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. Romans 12:2 (CSB)

2. Strengthen

¹⁶ Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. 2 Corinthians 4:16 (CSB)

[PAGE 1](#)

[\(Continued on page 25 \)](#)

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The Bible (Continued)

3. Teach

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16 (CSB)

4. Nourishment

¹³ This is why we constantly thank God because when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the word of God, which also works effectively in you who believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 (CSB)

5. Assurance

¹⁷ So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17 (KJV)

6. Guidance

²³ For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: Proverbs 6:23 (KJV)

7. Judgment

¹² For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 (CSB)

Just as working jigsaw puzzles are enjoyable and healthy for us, how much more important should our study of scripture be! I hope I have convinced you at this point that both of these exercises are not only similar but can work together to help you appreciate and increase your enjoyment and rewards whether it pertains to jigsaw puzzles or your spiritual wellbeing. Next, let's take a look at the similarities between the actual exercises of puzzling and Bible study.

When choosing a jigsaw puzzle you must first decide to purchase one or to borrow one from a friend. Purchasing a puzzle will allow you to choose one that you can relate to, or at least have an interest in the subject. When borrowing a puzzle you may have to choose one that isn't as appealing as you would like. Most of the time we are drawn to a particular puzzle because we like the picture on the box. When working a jigsaw puzzle the contents of the box will eventually reveal the picture that initially attracted our interest.

[PAGE 1](#)

[\(Continued on page 26\)](#)

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The Bible (Continued)

Just like your jigsaw puzzle, your Bible also contains many interlocking pieces inside that when attached and placed in the proper context will reveal the picture of Christ. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* John 1:1 (CSB).

There are many different versions of the Bible, just as there will be many different puzzles. You may have a choice which version you use or maybe a friend has given you a Bible, either way as long as it is a trusted translation and you can comfortably read and understand it, this version will work for you. Just as your picture will become clearer while working your puzzle, the same is true with your Bible study, the more pieces you can place together the more complete the picture will become.

I have found that the most effective way to work a jigsaw puzzle is to sort the pieces, first by sorting all of the edge pieces and setting them aside so that we can assemble the border of our puzzle first. By constructing our border we have given ourselves boundaries for our work area, as well as a starting place to work from the outside in. The same is true when you start your study of the Bible, although the pieces have been sorted out for you already to a certain extent. The Bible has already been divided into groups, down through history the Bible has been arranged into these groups to make it easier to read and study. Just as with your jigsaw puzzle once the border has been established you can start working toward the center from any of the edge pieces. Your Bible study should work the same way.

When you decide on a jigsaw puzzle, the number of pieces will always be a deciding factor, they can range from a few pieces to 1000's of pieces. When it comes to your Bible, all the different versions of the Bible will vary in the following statistics but just for reference sake, I am going to use what is probably considered the most popular Christian version, the King James Authorized Version.

BIBLE STATISTICS (King James Authorized):

Number of books in the Bible: 66

Chapters: 1,189

Verses: 31,102

Words: 783,137

Letters: 3,116,480

OLD TESTAMENT STATISTICS:

Number of books: 39

Chapters: 929

Verses: 23,145

Words: 602,585

Letters: 2,278,100

[PAGE 1](#)[\(Continued on page 27\)](#)

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The Bible (Continued)

NEW TESTAMENT STATISTICS:

Number of books: 27
Chapters: 260
Verses: 7,957
Words: 180,552
Letters: 838,380

When you set out to study the Bible it is important to notice that when you look at the division by testaments there are only two, the Old (before the birth of Christ) and the New (after the birth of Christ). When we look at the divisions by books we see that there are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament, which means that by books, 59 % of the Bible is Old Testament books and 41% are New Testament books. But when we look closer at scripture and use the word count, we find that 76.9 % of scripture comes from the Old Testament and 23.1 % comes from the New Testament. These percentages become more relative when we understand that the Old Testament books cover more than 4500 years, while the New Testament books cover a written record of time taking place during roughly 60 years plus, after the birth of Christ.

As you can see from the statistics given above, the Bible contains many pieces to the puzzle, and just as in a jigsaw puzzle. All these pieces are interlocking and fit together in ways that reveal the subject, which in our case is Christ. Just as our jigsaw puzzle needed the border as a starting point, so does our Bible study. I am suggesting that as our Bible study border, or better named "framework" we will start with the Book of Genesis. Many would like to start with the Book of John or some other New Testament book and I would agree that for new Christians this might be a good starting point. Although for older or more mature Christians, Genesis will give us the necessary framework for understanding the other scriptures to follow, just as our border did for the jigsaw puzzle. The Book of Genesis contains all the building blocks needed to construct a firm foundation for reading and understanding the complete Bible.

I hope and pray that this comparison, as simple as it may seem, has helped you understand that just as a jigsaw puzzle box contains all the pieces to complete the final picture. The Holy Bible contains many scriptures that when connected correctly will reveal God's revelation of His perfect Son, Jesus! In today's age of 4K High Definition, are we going to settle for a simple clip art drawing or do we want a Ultra High Definition image of who Christ is?

Kids Fun Page Answers

Animals on the Ark: *Apatosaurus*, bat, bird (flying), dodo bird, giraffe, horse, kangaroo, mammoth, monkey, mouse, rabbit, rhinoceros, skunk, snake, *Tyrannosaurus rex*
Animals not on the Ark: dolphin, eel, fish (gold), *Kronosaurus*, octopus, *plesiosaur*, sea horse, shark, starfish, whale

Concept of Redemption (Continued)

There was only one problem. Since the kids were listening to the bad guys and not communicating with their father, they didn't know they owned the house. Of course, the bad guys liked the situation the way it was so the kids continued to live in the house they owned, but they were living as servants to the bad guys. The kids were living as slaves to evil instead of living like owners. Because the kids had separated themselves from their father, they didn't know he had forgiven them and bought back the house for them. Because they did not listen to, and communicate with, their father they were living as slaves in a house that they owned. The father was in total grief so the older brother told his Dad, "I will go to the city where my siblings live and tell them they own the house." The siblings were not talking to the father but when the brother came to explain the situation, they let him in and began to listen to him. They really could not understand how generous their father was that they did not believe their brother at first. When the bad guys heard the brother explaining the situation, they said the only way they could continue to control the house was to kill the brother, so the bad guys killed the brother.

Their brother, their Father's perfect son gave his life to try and explain that his siblings should not be living as slaves to sinful people when they owned the house. It was only at the trial afterwards that the siblings realized their brother had given his life for them and they took control of the house from the evil ones.

From a Christian perspective this parable shows how many of us are living today. The Bible says that one special person, the Spirit (God) in bodily form, came and lived among us. Because that person died "for us all" we do not individually have to each atone for our individual sins. Christian belief says we should be living like owners, **but we are living as slaves to temptations, anxiety, material wants** and all forms of evil, because we are lost in the physical world living by physical rules, and not paying attention to the spiritual side of things and spiritual principles.

Christians believe that the house symbolizes the world and we should be living in the world like the owners we are. Each of us must declare "our room" in that house and take our rightful possession of it, because our Savior has bought it back for us. He paid the price with His life, His blood. The Christian believes that God wants to be in a relationship with each one of us (like He was in the garden of Eden) and even though we have inherited a "sinful nature" and we all sin, Jesus redeemed us so we can all live in the right relation with God.

The Bible says in Colossians 1:12:

"GIVING THANKS TO THE Father who HAS qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He HAS delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of HIS love, in whom we HAVE redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

The important part here is this is past tense. It has been done. This is a different concept from all other religions.

[PAGE 1](#)

[\(Continued on page 29\)](#)

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Concept of Redemption (Continued)

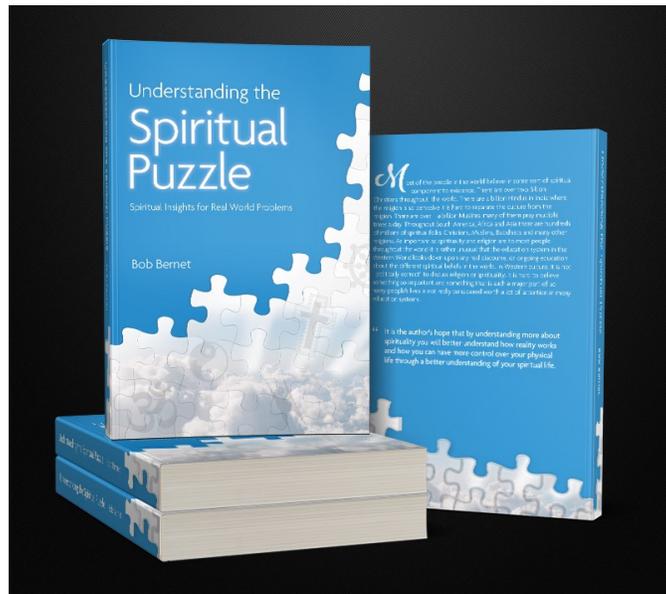
Romans 8:1 Paul speaking:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.... For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace... For if you live according to the flesh you will die (spiritually); but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live (spiritually). For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out “Abba, Father” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

These scriptures are describing reality from the spiritual view. Adam and Eve and the subsequent Jesus make a lot of sense when you look at “physical reality” as a part of the bigger spiritual picture.

To better understand the role of Jesus and the Christian concept of Redemption we need to understand the idea of forgiveness.

Excerpt from
Bob Bernet, *Understanding the Spiritual Puzzle*, (SpiritualPuzzle LLC. West Chester, OH. 2020) p 122-125.
For more information, or to order the book go to: www.thespiritualpuzzle.com



[PAGE 1](#)

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