

## **"Word and Spirit"**

Many charismatic churches claim to embrace "Word and Spirit" This means that they emphasise both the teaching from the Bible and the work of the Holy Spirit. Actually both are very important.

If one of these is over-emphasised then there may be problems:

**Word only** - In this case the church is mainly concerned with Bible teaching and accuracy. The advantage is that there is very sound doctrine and firm faith. The disadvantage is that it may be legalistic and cerebral with no spontaneity, spiritual gifts or experience of God. People may fall away because they do not feel anything.

**Spirit only** - In this case the church concentrates on experiencing God, the power of the Holy Spirit, healing and spiritual gifts. The advantage is that it provides experience and emotion. The disadvantage is that there may be doctrinal errors and strange beliefs. People may fall away because they are not grounded in the word of God and their faith is superficial.

Jesus, his followers and Paul preached a rational, intelligible, logical, historical message of salvation and also saw the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

## **Thinking Clearly**

It is important as Christians to think clearly about our faith. There is no need to be afraid to ask difficult questions. You will find that there are other people who have had the same questions and have managed to find some kind of answers.

## **You don't need to throw your brain away to be a Christian!**

The Christian faith does not involve blind faith but it is built on **informed faith**. It is a faith to be discussed and argued for.

There are, of course, many educated people and scientists who are Christians. In fact many of the early famous scientists were Christians or at least people who sincerely believed in God.

Scientists are people who are eager to honestly explore the fascinating universe and earth we occupy and find out how everything works. Scientists are not the enemy of Christians but are investigating the universe that God made!

Rom 1:19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

## **The Gospel: good news**

"Gospel" in Greek is *euaggelion* or evangel from which we get the word evangelist, evangelise etc. You may notice that the word "angel" (messenger) is in the word evangel - this is because it means "good message" or "good news" announced by a messenger.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, **I bring you good news of great joy** that will be for all the people.

## **Jesus' Message**

*Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom which included many parables, healings, deliverance and a revelation of who he was as the Christ and the Son of God.*

Matt 4:23 And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and **proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction** among the people.

Mark 1:14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, **proclaiming the gospel of God**, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe in the gospel.**"

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to **proclaim good news to the poor**. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the **captives** and recovering of sight to the **blind**, to set at liberty those who are **oppressed**, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

Luke 9:6 And they (apostles) departed and went through the villages, **preaching the gospel and healing everywhere**.

Matt 24:14 And this **gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world** as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Mark 16:15 And he said to them, "**Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.**"

## **Disciples' Message**

*After Jesus died and rose again, his followers continued to preach about the kingdom of God and about Jesus.*

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he **preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ**, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture **he told him (the Eunuch) the good news about Jesus**.

Acts 15:7 ...Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the

early days God made a choice among you, that **by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe**.

## **Paul's Message**

*Paul was an intelligent, educated man who had a dramatic encounter with God. The gospel was revealed to him. He emphasised the importance of the death and resurrection of Jesus.*

Gal 1:11 For I would have you know, brothers, that **the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel**. 12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but **I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ**.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of **the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

1 Cor 15:1 Now I would remind you, brothers, of **the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved**, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of **first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures**, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve...

Rom 10:14 **How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?** And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? **And how are they to hear without someone preaching?** 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "**How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!**"

Rom 15:19 **by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God**—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum **I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ;**

1 Cor 9:16 ...For necessity is laid upon me. **Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!**

2 Cor 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case **the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers**, to keep them from seeing the **light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God**.

1 Thess 1:4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you **not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction**. You know what **kind of men** we proved to be among you for your sake.

## **Biblical Material**

### **God created everything**

Gen 1:1 **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.** 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

**Day 1: Light and Darkness**

**Day 2: Water and Heaven(Sky)**

**Day 3: Dry land, seas, vegetation, plants, trees**

**Day 4: Sun, moon and stars**

**Day 5: Fish and birds**

**Day 6: Animals and mankind**

Gen 1:31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, **it was very good.** And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Gen 2:19 **Now out of the ground** the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens...

Psa 33:6 By the **word of the LORD** the heavens were made, and by **the breath of his mouth** all their host.

Psa 95:5 The sea is his, for he made it, and **his hands formed** the dry land.

Psa 148:2 Praise him, all his **angels**; praise him, all his **hosts**! 3 Praise him, **sun and moon**, praise him, all you **shining stars**! 4 Praise him, you **highest heavens**, and you **waters above the heavens**! 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD! For **he commanded** and they were created.

Is 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, **calling them all by name**; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, **not one is missing.**

Is 44:24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the LORD, who made all things, **who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself,**

Isaiah 45:12 **I made the earth and created man on it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host.**

Isaiah 45:18 For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (**he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!**): "I am the LORD, and there is no other.

Jeremiah 10:12 It is he who made the earth by his **power**, who established the world by his **wisdom**, and by his **understanding** stretched out the heavens.

Matt 19:4 He answered, "Have you not read that **he who created them from the**

**beginning** made them male and female...

Heb 11:3 By faith we understand that **the universe was created by the word of God**, so that **what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.**

2 Pet 3:5 For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water **by the word of God**,

Rev 4:11 "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, **for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.**"

### **God is the giver of life**

Gen 2:7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.**

Job 12:10 **In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.**

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me, and the **breath of the Almighty gives me life.**

Is 42:5 Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, **who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it...**

Acts 17:24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since **he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.**

### **The Son of God is also the creator**

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 **All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.**

Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 **For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.**

Heb 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, **through whom also he created the world.**

### **God created mankind in his image**

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "**Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.** And let them have dominion over

the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 **So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.**

Is. 43:7 **everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."**

Psalms 94:9 **He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?**

Psalms 103:14 For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

1Tim. 2:13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

### **God sustains creation**

Hebrews 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and **he upholds the universe by the word of his power.** After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, **and in him all things hold together.**

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "**My Father is working until now, and I am working.**"

Ephesians 1:11...according to the purpose of him **who works all things according to the counsel of his will,**

## **Date of Creation**

Using the time periods, people's age etc. in the Bible, it is possible to calculate back to the date of the creation.

The most famous calculation was done by James Ussher (1581-1656) who was Anglican Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland between 1625-1656. His conclusion:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Gen 1:1 This beginning of time, according to our chronology, happened at the start of the evening preceding the 23rd day of October in the year of the Julian Calendar, 710. The year before Christ 4004."

His other dates were:

4004 BC - Creation

2348 BC - The Great Flood

1921 BC - God's call to Abraham

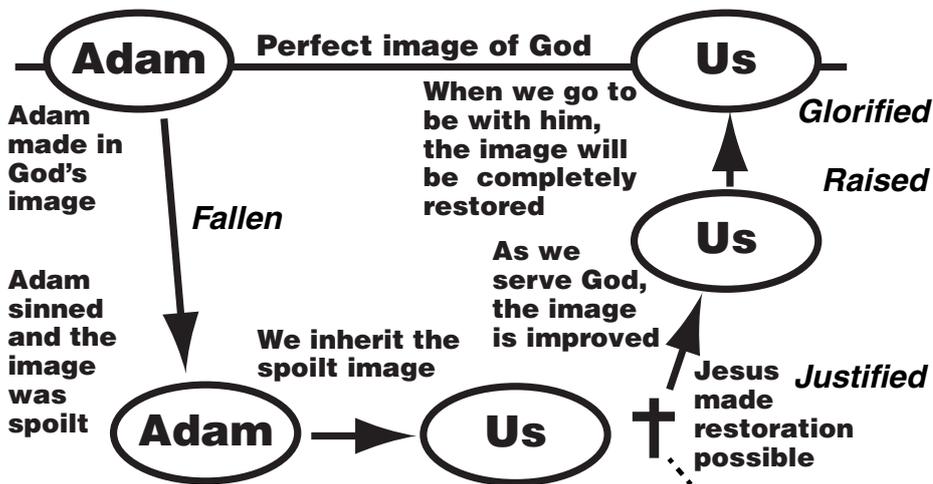
1491 BC - The Exodus from Egypt

1012 BC - The founding of the Temple in Jerusalem

584 BC - The destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon and the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity

4 BC - The birth of Jesus

Scholars have now revised some of these dates.



**Made in the Image of God**

Adam is the first man and representative of the whole human race who, male and female, are made in the image and after the likeness of God.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man(Adam) in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man(Adam) in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 5:1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man(Adam), he made him in the likeness of God. 2 Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man(Adam) when they were created.

**Adam and Eve sinned**

The first man, Adam, and his wife disobeyed God's command. The effect of this first sin is often called "the fall". This sin damaged Adam and Eve's relationship with God and spoilt the image of God in them.

Gen 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Gen 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Genesis 3: 8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

**We all inherit Adam's sinful nature**

The Bible traces all humankind's ancestry to Adam. From him we inherit our sinful nature and we are sinners. We are still made in the image of God but it is damaged and no longer perfect.

Gen 5:3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

Rom 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...

James 3:8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

**We can be justified by faith in Jesus**

The central message of the gospel is that when we believe in Jesus as our saviour our sins are forgiven and we are no longer guilty - we are justified(made righteous in God's sight). We are saved!

Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**Recovery of God's Image**

When we are saved we become legally righteous before God. The actual quality of our lives improves as we live righteously by the power of the Holy Spirit - then the image of God improves. We become more like God and Jesus..

Col 3:10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Eph 4:24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

2 Cor 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

**We will be glorified when Jesus returns**

We will be transformed into the perfect image of God, like Jesus, and the results of the fall will finally be completely undone.

Rom 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

1 Cor 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

1 Cor 15:49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Heb 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature,

**Image of God?**

Biologically	Spiritually
God	God
Man	Man
Animals	Animals
Plants	Plants
Earth	Earth

Here are some human qualities which distinguish us from animals but which show our resemblance to God.

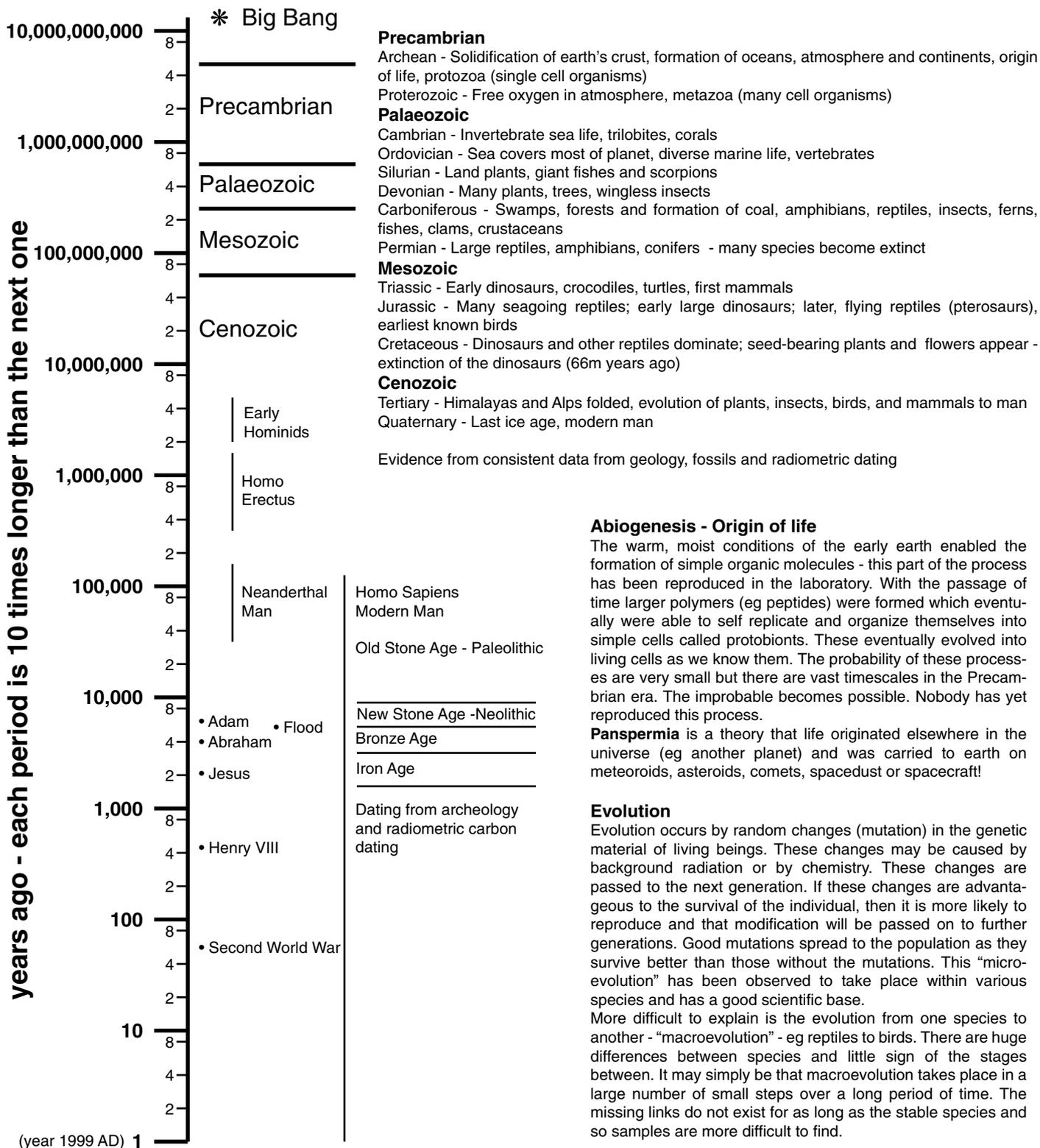
- We are moral beings.
- We have a spiritual dimension and can have a relationship with God.
- We are capable of abstract thought.
- We have complex language.
- We can be aware of eternity.
- We are creative in art, music, literature, science and technology.
- We are capable of selfless love, sympathy and sacrifice for others.
- We are given dominion over other living things and responsibility to care for the earth etc.

# Scientific Information: Creation and Evolution

## The Big Bang

Around 13,798,000,000 years ago the whole universe (and space) was tiny and mainly radiation. It expanded, and after one second the temperature was around 10 billion K and light fundamental particles were formed. By about three minutes it was cool enough to allow the formation of nuclei of hydrogen, helium and lithium. After 379,000 years the universe was around 3000 K cool enough for electrons to be captured by the nuclei to form atoms. This made the universe transparent and trapped radiation was now able to propagate - we can still see this today as background microwave radiation although the temperature has fallen to 3 K. As the general expansion continued, there was collapse in small regions with increase in temperature to produce galaxies and stars. Nuclear reactions in stars and supernova explosions produced the heavier elements. About 4.6 billion years ago, the sun and the solar system formed from a cloud of material left from previous stellar explosions. Heavier elements accumulated in the four solid planets nearer to the sun, including the earth.

Evidence for the Big Bang Theory comes from a number of consistent sources. The observed expansion of the universe (red-shift), cosmological relativistic theory, the ratio of hydrogen to helium in the universe, and the uniform background microwave radiation. Distances of stars are estimated from parallax measurements, variable star intensities, galaxy size and intensity. Expansion speeds are measured by the red shift.



## **Some Christian Views**

*Believing Christians have several ways of dealing with the biblical account and scientific theories. It is important to respect the views of others as well as holding your own views. Here are a few approaches:*

### **1) Literal Biblical**

This is popular among "Creationists". The Bible is the word of God and is literally correct and cannot be wrong. The universe was created in six twenty-four hour days as described in Genesis. Each species of plant or animal was designed and created by God. Man was a special final creation in the image of God.

Creationists usually hold to a "New Earth" theory. They are often opposed to the theories of cosmology, geology and evolution and have built up a large body of scientific arguments to refute the fact that the universe and the earth is very old. Some of their arguments include:

- What is the origin of the Big Bang? Where is the expected anti-matter? How did collapse in stars etc. occur after expansion?
- The red-shift of distant stars may not be due to their movement away from us but may be explained by gravitation or the nature of light travelling over vast distances.
- Stars are using their fuel at too fast a rate to have existed for very long.
- DNA and living cells are so complex that it is impossible for them to develop by random chance from inorganic components even given the large time scales.
- There is no evidence of evolution between species. Among the millions of fossil samples in museums, why are there no fossils for transitional forms between species. Suddenly new species appear in rock strata.
- Rock strata have been dated by fossils with the assumptions of evolution. Other dating methods have been fitted in with this. There are too many cases of fossils being in the wrong strata. There are fossilised human footprints and other fossil fragments and human artifacts in early strata.
- Often massive assumptions are made about species from very small fossil fragments.
- Rock strata, coal, oil and fossils can be explained by the flood described in Genesis. This was a catastrophic event involving earth movement, volcanic activity and extreme storms etc as well as water. Before the flood, there was a vapour canopy around the earth. Many different people groups have a story of a great flood.
- Radiometric dating is unreliable and

makes too many assumptions.

- There are missing links in the evolution theory of humans. So called near-derthal men may have been deformed cave dwelling humans.
- Civilisation began suddenly about 6000 years ago around the creation date and in the Middle East area described in the Bible.
- There is still detectable radioactive carbon 14 in diamonds which means they were made more recently than previously thought.
- The moon is gradually moving away from the earth because of the tidal drag. It would have moved a very long way if the usual scientific age of the moon is used.
- Soft tissue is found in dinosaur fossils which suggest they are not very old.
- 6000 years for existence of the human race gives a good estimate of the current world population. It would be much larger if the earth had existed longer.

Some of these arguments have suspect scientific support and secular scientists are usually very critical of them.

### **2) Created complete and appearing old**

If God were to create a complete object such as a piece of rock, a tree, an animal, a human being, a planet, a star or a galaxy, it will necessarily appear to have developed and existed for some time .

If, for example, he made a complete 20 year old man, the tissues in the man would appear to be 20 years old and you may conclude that he was born 20 years ago.

You can make the same case for everything that exists. So the universe was actually only created around 6000 years ago in a short time but it appears to be much older.

This view can both believe the literal Biblical account and also accept evolutionary theory.

Critics complain that aspects of this view are hard to believe. Did God build fossils of organisms which did not really exist into rocks and the earth?

### **3) Non-literal view of Bible passages - evolution supervised by God**

The account in Genesis is not intended to be taken literally or as exact science. The Bible is not a scientific text book. It is poetic language describing the important fact that God made everything in the universe. The "days" of creation may be much longer periods of time. The findings of science are also part of the revelation of God about the universe and should not be seen as a threat to Christians or to the truth of the Bible. We need to be seeking

the unbiased truth. There may have been a big bang and evolution but God was involved and supervised the process.

Creationists object to this view because it compromises the truth of the Bible and does not enable our inherited sinful nature to be traced back to Adam. In many places the Bible assumes the historicity of creation, Adam and Eve, the flood etc. Jesus clearly believed in these things.

### **4) Open minded about detail**

We simply do not know the details about how everything happened but we do know that God made everything and that mankind is made in the image of God.

"Job 38:1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:...

4 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Important theological truths are:

- God created everything somehow
- Human beings are made in the image of God
- This image is spoilt through our sin
- God loves us and sent Jesus to save us
- There is eternal life

*There are, of course, many other views and various combinations of the ones above. Christians often change their views over time.*

### **Relevance in spreading the gospel**

For some people, these issues are a stumbling block to believing in God and becoming a Christian. It may be helpful to let people know that Christians deal with this in different ways and not box them into a particular view. The choice need not be a binary one of science or the Bible.

People are more often converted through hearing the gospel message, understanding the love of God and seeing the love of Christians rather than being convinced of some view of creation.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

1 Cor 1:18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God...20...Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

## Reliability of the Bible

Many accuse Christians of believing an old irrelevant book written years ago which has been changed as it has been copied over the years.

The Bible, however, is not a mishmash of confused information but contains a steady, consistent, logical and historical story.

There is considerable consistency within the Bible and much other supporting evidence from non-biblical sources, archaeology and history.

As Christians, we can be confident that what was written down by the various Bible authors has been faithfully transmitted down through the centuries. We can also trust quality translations by large panels of qualified translators

### Bible Texts

This is a time chart covering the first 400 years of the Christian era.

#### • New Testament events

Jesus lived from around 4 BC to AD 30 and the book of Acts brings us up to near AD 70.

#### • New Testament books

The earliest book of the New Testament is Galatians (AD 48) followed by most of Paul's other letters in the next 10 years. Most scholars agree that the gospels and Acts were written in their present form around AD 60-90 based on earlier written or oral accounts.

#### • Papyri

These papyrus documents and fragments (P52 etc.) still actually exist in libraries and are dated reliably. They are included to illustrate that we have very early sections of the New Testament to compare with later copies. P52 is in Manchester, UK.

#### • Codices (plural of codex)

These are books containing the New Testament and a Greek translation of the Old Testament (which was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic).

#### • Translations

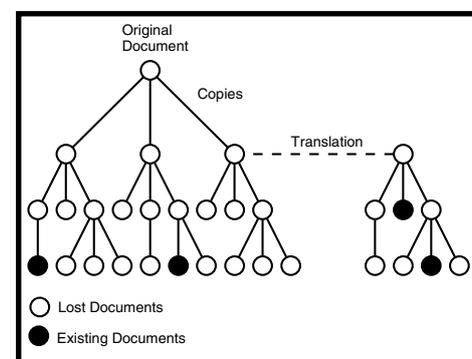
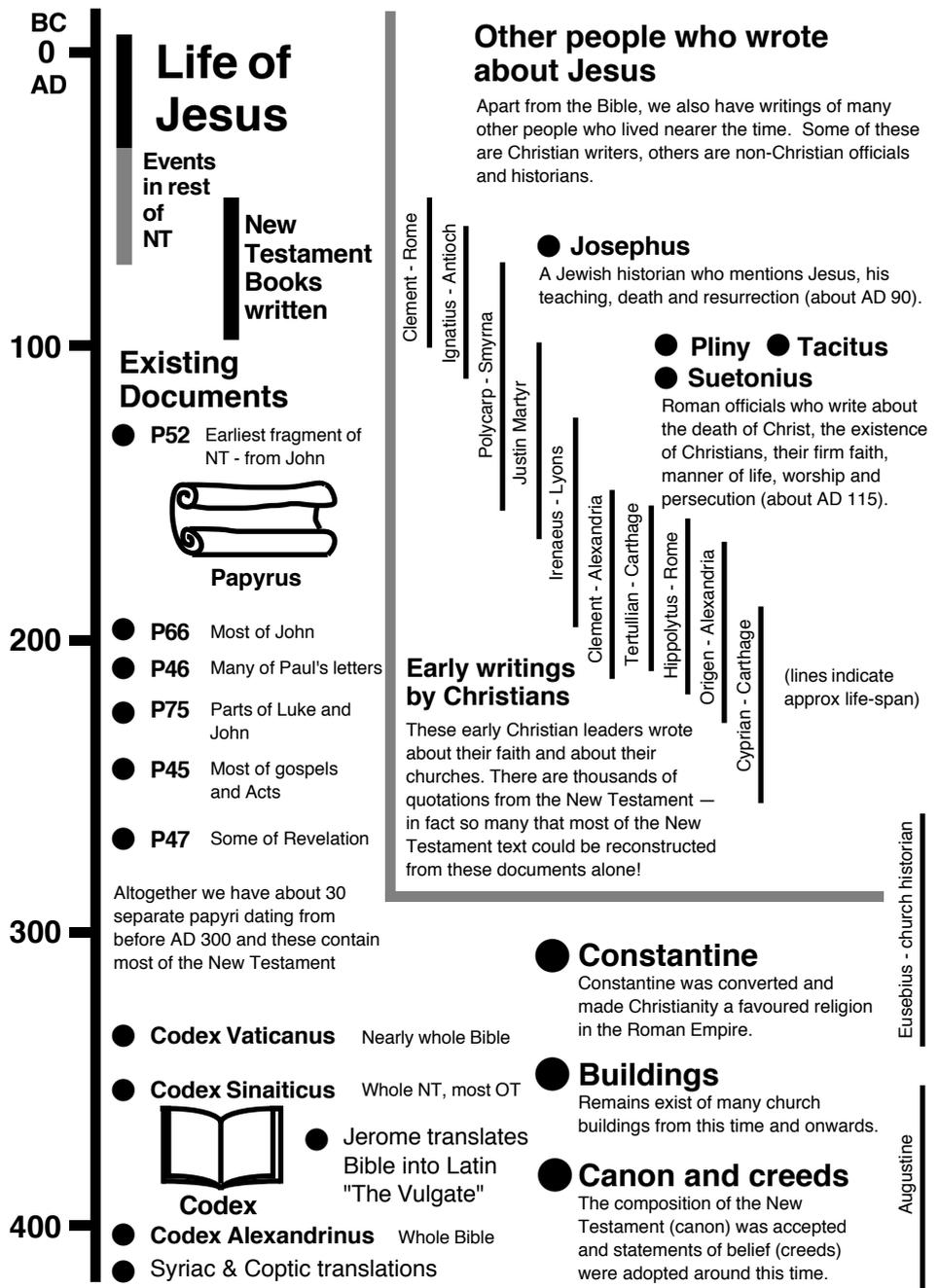
The existence of translations is important because they are based on earlier manuscripts and support the transmission of the text.

#### • Christian writers

The long list of early Christian leaders with their approximate life span is to illustrate the continuity of Christian writing over the centuries. Some of these writers were prolific.

#### • Other evidence

The non-Christian authors give very early independent evidence for the existence of Christians and after AD 300 there is plenty of archeological, documentary and historical evidence.



#### • Old Testament

The earliest full Hebrew copies of the Bible are dated around AD 1000. There are, however much earlier translations of parts of the Old Testament into Greek, Latin, Coptic, Syriac and Aramaic. The "Dead Sea Scrolls" containing Hebrew copies from 150 BC - AD 70 confirm the faithful transmission of the scriptures.

#### • Copying errors

Some think that the Bible has been copied over and over again and so has been changed or has lots of mistakes.

Note that:

- (a) Copying was done very carefully - the scribes were copying the word of God!
- (b) The copy chain was branching and the existing copies have come via different routes from the original document. Mistakes can often be tracked down.
- (c) There are only a small number of uncertain words and these do not significantly change the message of the Bible.

#### • Textual Criticism

Textual Criticism is the name used for the established methods of comparing copies, versions and translations to reconstruct the original text as closely as possible. We can trust the Bible.

## Related Issues

### Cosmological Argument

This is an argument used by philosophers and theologians to give evidence for the existence of God.

Since the universe exists, then it depends for its existence on a "first cause" (God) which exists independently of the universe.

An example is the Big Bang theory. Science can attempt to describe all the processes in the universe from the time it was a tiny point and has expanded to the present time. How this tiny point came into existence, however, is a philosophical problem, not a scientific one.

Gen 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Heb 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

### Intelligent Design

Many have been convinced of the existence of a creator by the amazing complexity in nature - especially in living cells and organisms. We easily recognise a designer in man-made objects - eg a phone. We can also recognise the hand of a designer in the natural world and the universe. It is difficult to believe that everything is only the result of the random processes suggested by science.

Rom 1:20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Psalms 139:14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

### How or Why? - Purpose?

Science generally answers the question *how* do things happen but it does not answer the question *why*. To the atheist scientist we are just organisms on the surface of the earth like all other living beings and we will die and decompose - there is no real purpose to our lives. As Christians, we believe that God has a clear purpose for our lives both here on earth and for eternity. We also believe that he has purpose for the whole of the universe.

Prov 16:4 The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.

Rom 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Revelation 4:11 "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

### God of the Gaps

Some Christians are very pleased when science cannot explain things and attribute this to God. Popular areas have been missing links in evolution or the origin of life. This is generally a dangerous strategy for Christians since the gaps in scientific knowledge get smaller and smaller as we progress. It is wiser to see the hand of God in all of creation, whether or not it is explained by science yet.

### Miracles

A miracle is an event that happens contrary to normal natural laws. Christians believe that God created and sustains the universe and that he may make changes and intervene as he wishes. He can create, uncreate and control all he has made. Miracles are a fundamental part of the Bible story and cluster around the lives of Moses, Elijah and Jesus - the transfiguration trio! They are also evident as a normal part of the spread of the gospel in the early church.

Very significant miracles are the conception and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Acts 19:11 And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,

### Supernatural, Spiritual...

There is a whole spiritual, supernatural dimension which is inaccessible to science and physical observation. From very early times, people groups all over the world have believed in spirits, gods and a soul which endures beyond this mortal existence.

Christians also believe that God is spirit and he reveals himself as the Holy Spirit. There are also angels, demons and the devil.

John 4:24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

1 Thess 5:23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 1:26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

Matt 8:16 That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.

Matt 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

## How Science Works

The first step is that you notice some **regularity** in the world around you and make a **hypothesis**. As you make more careful **observations**, you can confirm or change your hypothesis. You may then set up **experiments** which are designed to **test your hypothesis**. You can also use your hypothesis to **predict** what will happen in new situations. Eventually you become so sure of your hypothesis that it becomes an established **theory**. Of course, it is always possible that evidence may come to light which means that you have to adjust or expand your theory.

Scientific theories are sometimes **models** such as the theory of evolution, tectonic plates, atoms and molecules or the Periodic Table. Other theories are more numerical and include **equations** such as Newton's laws of motion, Einstein's  $E=mc^2$  or the laws of thermodynamics. These are often called **laws**.

Scientists are always trying to connect theories together to make a unified theory of the universe - a **theory of everything!** Important basic theories are general relativity, quantum field theory and the four fundamental interactions of gravitation, electromagnetic force, weak and strong nuclear forces.

**Are scientific theories true?** - It may be more accurate to say that scientific theories are useful established, current summaries of our understanding of the universe. Scientists are always aware that new evidence may come to light which could significantly change even our most cherished theories.

## The End of the World

Life on earth is only possible because of the delicate temperature balance. Global warming caused by atmospheric changes may make life difficult or impossible. Also the output of the sun may change. The fuel of the sun (hydrogen) will eventually run out in about 5 billion years time and it will eventually expand and become a red giant star.

Of course we expect the end to come much sooner with the return of Jesus and the events of the end time and the day of the Lord.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

**Notes:**