The Christian Life and Biblical Apologetics

by [Luke Wayne](https://carm.org/luke-wayne)
2/10/17

It is a part of our Christian calling that we remain ever prepared to provide a reasoned defense of our faith to those who may ask. This does not mean we must have memorized answers to every single challenge an unbeliever might bring. It does mean, however, that we ought to cultivate a readiness to positively respond to the world's objections rather than evade or concede to them. This is the task of [apologetics](https://carm.org/introduction-apologetics). It is an aid to our evangelism, a means of discipleship and encouragement for our fellow believer, and an act of obedience to our God. Apologetics does not exist in a vacuum, however, and must flow out from a consistent Christian life. Indeed, though our apologetics absolutely must consist of spoken and written words, they must also be buttressed by the foundation of a holy and unanswerable life.

One of the most important verses on the subject of apologetics is God's command to us through Peter:

"Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence," ([1 Peter 3:15](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Pet%203.15)).

We rarely see these words placed in their surrounding context:

"To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. For, 'The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.' Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong," ([1 Peter 3:8-17](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Pet%203.8-17)).

Notice that, while we are unquestionably called to give a verbal answer to those who questions the hope that is in us, the force of that response flows out from the fact that our tongues are not known for deceit and our lives are visibly transformed by the Christ whom we preach. Indeed, that is the only reason anyone is asking the question! If no one can see in your life that there is a hope within you, they are probably not going to ask you to explain it. It is doubtful anyone will question why you are different if you aren't. A heart that has Christ sanctified as Lord within will flow out to a life that centers on Him and will thus stand out in this world. It will be both the occasion and the underlying weight of our verbal apologetic, as well as our accuser's shame and conviction. The Apostle Paul likewise wrote:

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ," ([2 Corinthians 10:3-5](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Cor%2010.3-5)).

We tear down speculations and arguments raised against the truth of the gospel. We get our hands dirty in a war of ideas, a battle for hearts and minds. Even here, however, we are not merely taking thoughts captive to the "knowledge of Christ," but rather to the "obedience of Christ." Apologetics is not only tied to changed opinions, but to changed lives. Our Lord Jesus Himself gave us this charge:

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven," ([Matthew 5:14-16](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Matt%205.14-16)).

Our good works, done in Christ, are a means God uses to cause men to "glorify your Father who is in heaven." When people not only hear an explanation of why the gospel is true but also see visible evidence through observing the power it has to change your life, there is little they can say. Sure, many will still reject you, and perhaps mock you or even commit violence against you, but it will be to their own great shame and to the glory of Christ if they do so. Note the words of some of the earliest Christian apologists just after the time of the New Testament, and how the lives of Christian communities helped them make their case:

"They have the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself graven upon their hearts; and they observe them, looking forward to the resurrection of the dead and life in the world to come.  They do not commit adultery nor fornication, nor bear false witness, nor covet the things of others. They honor father and mother and love their neighbors. They judge justly, and they never do to others what they would not wish to happen to themselves. They appeal to those who injure them and try to win them as friends. They are eager to do good to their enemies. They are gentle and easy to be entreated. They abstain from all unlawful conversation and all impurity. They despise not the widow nor oppress the orphan; and he that has, gives ungrudgingly for the maintenance of him who has not. If they see a stranger, they take him under their roof, and rejoice over him as over a very brother; for they call themselves brethren not after the flesh but after the spirit. And they are ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of Christ; for they observe His commands without swerving, and live holy and just lives, as the Lord God enjoined upon them. And they give thanks unto Him every hour, for all meat and drink and other blessings," (The Apology of Aristides, Section 15 early 2nd century).

"We who formerly delighted in fornication now embrace chastity alone. We who formerly used magical arts dedicate ourselves to the good and unbegotten God. We who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions now bring what we have into a common stock, and communicate to everyone in need. We who hated and destroyed one another and, on account of their different manners, would not live with men of a different tribe, now, since the coming of Christ, live familiarly with them. We pray for our enemies, and endeavour to persuade those who hate us unjustly to live conformably to the good precepts of Christ, to the end that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of a reward from God the ruler of all," (Justin Martyr, First Apology, Chapter 14, early/mid second century).

"They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all, and they beget children, but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners and are persecuted by the Greeks, yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred," (The Epistle to Diognetus, Chapter 5, mid 2nd century).

This is not to say that our argument should be a simplistic, emotional slogan like, "we're good people, believe us!" First of all, we are *not* good people. We are desperate sinners living out the grace of God through the righteousness of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. Any good the world sees in us is Christ's good, not our own. Secondly, the above paragraphs are small excerpts of larger works that seriously engaged the issues. The changed lives of believers represented a visible context in which the rational case could be taken more seriously. We are to preach and defend the gospel with words, but the most well-trained words of a professional apologist will fall on deaf ears if that apologist is a man who is living like the devil. The lips that defend the gospel must not be the same lips that spread gossip and profanities or that slander our brothers.

Sanctify the Lord in your heart, uphold the gospel with sound arguments, and live that gospel with zeal for God and compassion for your neighbor. In this way will our God be honored in our apologetics.

 Prayer in Apologetics

by [Matt Slick](https://carm.org/matt-slick)
6/9/2007

One of the dangers of the apologist is falling into the trap of relying on his own intellectual abilities to try to wrestle someone into the kingdom of God.  I am sad to say that I have been guilty of this.

Pride hides itself in the heart, so it cannot be seen.  When we find ourselves relying on our knowledge instead of God's word [mercy](https://carm.org/dictionary-mercy) and [grace](https://carm.org/dictionary-grace), then we have fallen into that trap.  It is not reason that converts but God's Spirit.  It is not logic that draws us to God but Jesus ([John 12:32](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%2012.32)).  It is not evidence that convicts a person of his sins but the Holy Spirit ([John 16:8](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%2016.8)).  That is why we need to rely on God and trust that He will use our defense of the truth for His glory and their benefit.

To ignore prayer in [apologetics](https://carm.org/dictionary-apologetics) is to be prideful.  It is the same as saying we don't need God.  But we do.  We need to pray for those who are lost, pray for their minds to be opened, pray that God's word will ring true to them, pray that our witness will be strong, and pray that the evil one will not have a foot-hold with them or with us.  We are fighting a spiritual battle and need spiritual tools.  Prayer is perhaps the most important of them all.

It is the Lord who opens the heart and mind - not you ([Acts 16:14](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Acts%2016.14)). Ask God for guidance ([John 14:14](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%2014.14)). Ask for blessing in your understanding ([James 1:5](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/James%201.5)) and your speech ([Col. 4:6](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Col.%204.6)). Ask the Lord to also open their understanding to God's word ([Luke 24:45](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Luke%2024.45)).  This is what He does.

Prayer brings humility to the one praying.  It admits dependence on God.  If we are humble and depend on God, we are more likely to hear His voice.  Prayer means that you are seeking divine intervention.  It works power to your words.  It changes your heart.  It moves you closer to God.

Being a great apologist is not a badge of honor to be worn by the [Christian](https://carm.org/dictionary-christian) as a demonstration of his intellectual abilities.  Rather, it is a response to the calling of God upon all Christians ([1 Pet. 3:15](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Pet.%203.15)) that is to be undertaken with love and humility: love of people and humility before God.

Never let your study and practice of apologetics replace the power - received by faith - in prayer before the Holy Creator.  Ask God to empower your words and open the hearts of those with whom you speak . . . and then study and witness to the best of your abilities.

 Classical Apologetics

[by Matt Slick](https://carm.org/matt-slick)
6/8/2007

 Classical Apologetics is that style of Christian defense that stresses rational arguments for the existence of God and uses evidence to substantiate biblical claims and miracles.  It is quite similar to [evidential apologetics](https://carm.org/evidential-apologetics) and appeals to human reason and evidence.  Early Classical Apologists include Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas Aquinas.  Contemporary classical apologists are Norman Geisler, William Craig, J. P. Moreland, and R.C. Sproul.

Some of the arguments relied upon for proofs of God's existence are the [cosmological](https://carm.org/cosmological-argument) argument and the [teleological](https://carm.org/teleological-argument) argument.   The cosmological argument attempts to prove that God exists by stating that there has to be an uncaused cause of all things.  That uncaused cause is God.  The teleological argument uses the analogy of design; that is, the universe and life exhibit marks of design.  Therefore, there must be a Designer.  Other times, strict evidence is used to establish Christianity's validity.  Of course, both aspects are also combined in classical apologetics.

An example of the latter might be as follows:

**Allen**: Can you give me a logical reason why God exists?
**Matt**:  I will try (*simple logic*).  The universe exists.  The universe cannot be eternal because if it were eternal, then it would mean that an infinite amount of time has passed in order for us to get to the present.  But you cannot transverse an infinite amount of time.  Therefore the universe is not infinitely old.
**Allen**:  That is an interesting argument.  Do you have anything else?
**Matt**:  Sure (*Cosmological Argument*).  All things that came into existence are caused to exist.  There cannot be an infinite regression of causes because this would mean that there was an infinite amount of time in the past that had to be traversed in order for us to get to the present.  Again, you are not able to cross an infinite amount of time.  Therefore, it is logical to say that there must be a single uncaused cause.  I propose that that uncaused cause is God.

The preceding very simplistic dialogue has strengths and weaknesses, but it demonstrates a way of using evidence and logic as a defense to support the resurrection--a biblical miracle.

A variation on this could focus on prophecies and be as follows:

1. The Bible claims to be the word of God.
2. The Bible has been accurately transmitted to us through the copying method.
3. The Old Testament was written before the New Testament.
4. The Old Testament contains prophecies of Jesus fulfilled in the New Testament.
5. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies.
6. This shows that the Bible is inspired.
7. Since it is inspired, it is accurate.
8. It says that God exists.
9. Therefore, God exists.

No argument is without strengths and weaknesses, and all Classical Apologetic approaches have been tackled by critics.  But, the critics are not left unanswered; and Christians have, in turn, refuted the refutations.  This back-and-forth process of point-counter-point is going to continue until Jesus returns.  Nevertheless, God commands that we do our best to defend the faith, and classical apologetics is one of the means to do that.

Much of the information here on CARM can be used in a classical defense.  There is documentation for [biblical manuscript evidence](https://carm.org/manuscript-evidence) in the Bible section.  There is also a list of [prophecies](https://carm.org/prophecy-bible-and-jesus) about Jesus in the Bible section and more.  I recommend you go to the [Apologetics Dialogues](https://carm.org/apologetics-dialogues) section and read a few of them to see how different subjects can be used.  If you want logical approaches, try some proofs for God in the [Atheist](https://carm.org/atheism) section.  Finally, if you really want to test yourself, get on the Internet, find a chat room through AOL Instant Messenger or Yahoo Instant Messenger, and go in and debate with people in religious discussion rooms.  You will learn real fast what you need to know.

Whichever you do, think of apologetics as a mosaic of skills and knowledge that God uses in the believer to bring truth to the world.  At first it is not that easy to do, but it gets easier and easier the more you do it.

 Are there Guidelines for doing Apologetics?

by[Matt Slick](https://carm.org/matt-slick)
6/8/2007

Almost every discipline has a set of rules and guidelines that help a person perform better. In fact, guidelines could be produced for nearly any endeavor. Why should [apologetics](https://carm.org/dictionary-apologetics) be any different?

Following are some things I have found that are very helpful in developing apologetic skills. I am not saying that these are definitive or exhaustive in scope. Rather, these are simply the things that I have found that have helped me. I hope they help you.

Remember, there is no method for apologetics that works in all situations. There can be no outline approach that, if followed, will always lead a person to understand and accept the truth. That is why apologetics is a combination of what you know and are. It is a fluid expression that must adapt to the obstacles in its course.

Apologetic skill is directly related to your experience and knowledge. You gain knowledge by experiencing a situation where you defend the truth. This is "doing" apologetics. It is through this doing that you polish what you know, discover your areas of weakness, and plan ways to improve your abilities. You need to learn as much as you can through study, practice what you learn in real situations, think of ways to apply what you know, mess up, and keep going. All of this is what apologetics is and is how you get better. So, is there one single rule that will help you develop skill in apologetics? Yes, there is. Go for it! You will have success and failures.

In fact, when I teach seminars on apologetics, I can confidently state that I have probably made more mistakes in evangelism, witnessing, apologetics, etc., than any ten people combined. My wife will attest to that. But hey, that's okay. You don’t grow if you don’t go.

Nevertheless, here are some guidelines.

1. **Pray**
	1. It is the Lord who opens the heart and mind - not you ([Acts 16:14](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Acts%2016.14)). Ask God for guidance ([John 14:14](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%2014.14)). Ask for blessing in your understanding ([James 1:5](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/James%201.5)) and your speech ([Col. 4:6](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Col.%204.6)). Ask the Lord to also open their understanding to God's word ([Luke 24:45](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Luke%2024.45)).
2. **Memorize Scripture**
	1. Few things are as powerful when defending the faith as being able to cite chapter and verse of a particular verse ([Psalm 119:11](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%20119.11); [2 Tim. 3:16](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Tim.%203.16)).
3. **Memorize the locations of information**
	1. Whether it be in cult material, secular material, or any other source you've got. It is extremely valuable to know material in different disciplines. Of course, you cannot know everything, but you can memorize a few pertinent facts about Mormonism or evolution or philosophy or the Bible or whatever else may be needed. You will learn what you need as you witness.
4. **Listen to what is being said to you**
	1. Respond to what is said. It is by listening that you will then know what to say. Listen for errors in logic. Listen for motives, for hurts, for intent. Listen.
5. **Don’t interrupt**
	1. This is just common courtesy. You need to earn the right to speak. Just because you have an answer doesn’t mean it must be heard right away. When interruptions become the norm, learning is thrown out the window.
6. **Don’t be afraid to make mistakes**
	1. One of the best ways to improve is to discover your weaknesses. The best way to discover your weaknesses is when mistakes uncover them for you.
7. **Study what you discover you don’t know**
	1. If you don’t know something, then study it. Get books and read. Write down what you learn.
8. **Don’t be afraid to take a chance**
	1. This takes real faith. All you have to do is be available, speak up, and take a chance in defending the Christian faith. You’ll be surprised at how well you do. And when you mess up, don’t worry - review guideline #6.
9. **Rehearse**
	1. Perhaps the best place to do apologetics is in your head. Think of a situation, a scenario that you need to have an answer for and develop an answer. Practice in your mind. Try to corner yourself and then get out of it.
10. **Read books that deal with what you need to know**
	1. The knowledge of others is invaluable. Isaac Newton said, "If I have reached the stars, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants." In other words, he learned from others.

Basically, the guidelines are common sense. All you have to do is try.  Don’t worry about failure, keep going, pray, and trust God. It works.  You'll make mistakes, but that is how we learn.

Praise God for the Holy Spirit.

**Christian apologists trip over the age of the earth … again1**

***by***[***Thomas Fretwell***](https://creation.com/thomas-fretwell)

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**How could a loving God … ? Identifying the problem**

You cannot use the Fall as a response to why we have death and suffering if you also accept the evolutionary time scale, because they contradict each other.

Sooner or later, anyone involved in the subject of Christian apologetics will be asked about the existence of death and suffering. The question can take many forms: Why is there so much suffering in the world? Why does God allow it? What about suffering caused by natural evil? Historically, the Christian response to this question has been to explain that the original creation, which was declared by God to be “very good” ([Genesis 1:31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%201.31)), did not contain such aberrations as death and suffering. Apologists then typically point to the historical event of the Fall as that which allowed sin and death to enter and corrupt the created order ([Romans 8:20–22](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.20%E2%80%9322)). Such a response is [a biblical one](https://creation.com/no-death-before-the-fall), yet many are seemingly oblivious that this answer can only be used consistently within a ‘young-Earth’ framework. While correctly pointing to the Fall as an explanation for death and suffering, many apologists who accept the evolutionary long-age paradigm of earth history are unaware of the massive inconsistency. Old-Earth belief directly undercuts the biblical defence against objections posed by death and suffering. The secular paradigm is built upon ‘dating’ methods and assumptions which place death, suffering, disease, [cancer](https://creation.com/is-cancer-very-good) and [carnivorous activity](https://creation.com/the-carnivorous-nature-and-suffering-of-animals) long before the Fall of man. Thus, pointing to the Fall as the *terminus a quo2* for [death and suffering](https://creation.com/why-death-suffering) is logically inconsistent, and many thoughtful sceptics have picked up on this.

**Exposing the problem.**

Justin Brierley

A recent example occurred on the *Unbelievable* podcast hosted by Justin Brierley. This is the UK’s leading apologetics podcast that brings believers and unbelievers together for discussion and debate. I listen to the show regularly and greatly enjoy the content. Recently, an episode aired which featured Christian philosopher Paul Copan.3 Paul is well known for his book *Is God a Moral Monster?* which attempts to explain many of the difficult passages in the Old Testament (see also [this review](https://creation.com/argumentum-ad-nihilum-argument-amounting-to-nothing) of Copan’s book, co-authored with William Lane Craig, *Creation out of nothing*). As part of the show, listeners were invited to submit questions for him. The central part of the show featured what I considered an illuminating, yet frustrating, exchange between Paul and an atheist caller.

**The age of the earth is pivotal**

The caller was introduced by Justin Brierley as a person with a question about death and natural evil that seems to predate the Fall. He explained that his question was based on a video response that Justin made previously to the infamous viral video of Stephen Fry (discussed [here](https://creation.com/an-infuriated-and-vindictive-god)), lamenting the God who would create bone cancer in children and worms that burrow into the eye.4 The caller first summarised Justin’s previous response;5 basically, these bad things are not how the world was intended to be, and the world is now out of kilter because of the Fall. So far so good—nothing to disagree with here. The caller then set his trap. He started by getting Paul Copan to confirm that he held to a 4.5 billion-year-old earth. Once Paul agreed that this was indeed his view, the caller proceeded with his main question:

Paul Copan

“ … knowing the world as we see today, if extrapolating back millions of years, we have millions of years of death (as the engine of evolution), suffering, cancers, parasites and diseases. How is all that equated for if the Fall is responsible for it?”

The point which this caller had so astutely noticed, and was trying to get the host to acknowledge, was that you cannot use the Fall as a response to why we have death and suffering if you also accept the evolutionary time scale, because they contradict each other! If you want to accept the old-earth view then you must acknowledge the history that goes with it, i.e. millions of years of death, disease and bloodshed before the Fall. But once you accept that, you have no option but to say that God did in fact create these things and even pronounced them “very good” ([Genesis 1:31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%201.31)).

**Ignoring the issue**

However, most people can recognise that such an inconsistent answer has little apologetic strength and the next five minutes of discussion illustrated this. Paul responded by first referencing Scripture passages6 which he said hinted at the food chain being the way God has ordered the world. However, citing basically poetic references to the animal kingdom as seen by someone living long after the Fall did nothing to answer the caller’s question. So Paul continued, explaining that he wouldn’t call animal death a natural evil and that animal suffering is an incorrect category. Again, he was just evading the thrust of the question. Unsurprisingly, the caller interjected that, while Paul Copan might be happy to dismiss animal death as “natural”, to him it was actually horrific. Indeed, Richard Dawkins has remarked that, “The total amount of [animal] suffering per year is beyond all decent comprehension.”7 There are crippling and painful genetic diseases and mutations—things which Justin had implied were a result of the Fall. But how did they come about before the Fall, if Adam was really to blame?

**Exegetical errors**

Interestingly, the caller also commented that he had seen at conferences that Christians are honestly struggling with this issue. Paul’s response was that the world which was first created was not in fact perfect, his argument being that the phrase “very good” from Genesis does not imply perfection. This statement flies directly in the face of Hebrew lexicons which show that moral and physical perfection are conveyed by these words (see, [Was God’s finished creation perfect?](https://creation.com/creation-perfect)). The atheist caller would have been warranted in asking whether the phrase “very good” also included the presence of cancer! Paul continued:

“ … the primary focus is on humans who rebel and as a result the world is corrupted, spiritual death comes to human beings. The effects of the Fall are a spiritual issue rather than a physical one”.

However, the description of the effects of the Fall clearly includes physical elements: the serpent is cursed above all livestock, women will experience unpleasant pain in childbirth, the ground is cursed and will bring forth thorns and thistles, and growing food will be a laborious task ([Genesis 3:14–19](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%203.14%E2%80%9319)). Also, and most importantly, man was to die a physical death; ‘dust to dust’ (v.19). These unquestionably are physical changes. Paul then referenced the teaching in [Romans 8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208), which talks about the creation being in “bondage to corruption” ([Romans 8:21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.21)), in an attempt to say that this is something bigger than the Fall; it is about replacing the first creation. Yet again, he evaded the real issue, which is about when this bondage started; at the Fall or hundreds of millions of years before it?

The atheist caller, clearly getting a little frustrated that his question was not being answered, said, “You are kind of avoiding the issue by putting everything back to man. I am trying to home in on the stuff before. You are brushing it aside by saying the world is not good. Justin, you seemed to imply that the eye-eating worm is because the world is out of kilter due to the Fall, but Paul you are maybe implying, this is how it was made by God?” In other words, he was pointing out that Justin Brierley and Paul Copan could not both be correct.

**Unsatisfactory answers**

In Paul’s final reply, he acknowledged that he believed there were instances before the Fall where parasites caused death and suffering, and that natural disasters were responsible for the deaths of many hominids—which, in his theistic-evolutionary worldview were not, of course, fully-evolved humans and did not have souls. He implied that, since neither [parasites](https://creation.com/what-about-parasites) nor hominids were [divine image-bearers](https://creation.com/made-in-the-image-of-god), their suffering and death before the Fall of man could not be counted as true death or evil.

Rather than trying to invent different explanatory models or interpretations of Genesis that can accommodate millions of years, we need to realise that the Bible can and should be taken at face value.

Sadly, this view of history is imposed on Scripture and cannot be supported by any biblical references. Besides, admitting such a situation actually confirms the atheist’s point: ‘secular interpretations of earth-history’ and the biblical record are inconsistent. At the end of the exchange, Justin jumped in, almost second-guessing his original response, to say that he would have to check the exact wording on his video.3 He asserted that human choice is responsible for the world being the way it is, but that maybe bone cancer is part of a wider picture of the creation being in bondage to decay; that in some ways, it could be part of a bigger picture on a mystical level. I’ll admit, that along with the atheist caller, I do not really understand what this means!

**Fixing the problem**

This sorry episode clearly demonstrates that [the age of the earth is not a secondary, peripheral issue](https://creation.com/age-earth-matters), related only to the creation-evolution debate. It is absolutely pivotal in determining how we answer fundamental questions relating to death and suffering. If we are inconsistent, astute sceptics, like this caller, will pick up on it. It also demonstrates the irrational fear that so many Christian apologists have over the age issue, causing them to repeatedly make these types of contradictory statements. This fear seems to be driven by the incorrect assumption that deep time has been irrefutably demonstrated. However, such an assumption is unwarranted given the abundant evidence available today that [the deep time paradigm is flawed](https://creation.com/age-of-the-earth).

The solution really is quite simple: rather than trying to invent different explanatory models or interpretations of Genesis that can accommodate millions of years, we need to realise that the Bible can and should be taken at face value. Its explanation for the origin of suffering and death needs no alteration and the problem only appears when secular evolutionary assumptions are imported into our theology (see [Plumbing and paradigms](https://creation.com/assumptions-in-science)). It is those compromising assumptions that need to be thrown out! Only then can we present the biblical explanation of death and suffering without contradictions.