Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

9 August 2015 Message 6 of 10

NLT 50 Minutes

**Millions of Years: Where Did the Idea Come From?**

Title

Dr. Terry Mortenson, Answers in Genesis

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**Topic:** Age of Earth

**Subject:** Where did the idea of millions of years come from?

**Complement:** The idea of millions of years did not come from science or the Bible but from anti-God philosophy.

**Purpose:** The listeners will believe in a young earth.

# Introduction

### Interest: Singapore is 50 years old today—how did we get this high in such a short time? Not by accident! It was by intelligence and hard work! I commend Singapore today.

SG50  
(2 slides)

### Need: The age of the earth is a huge debate today—how did we get this low in such a short time? By accident?! Where did we get the millions of years idea?

Verses  
(2 slides)

Timescale  
(2 slides)

#### We are in a battle of ideas: 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Col. 2:8

#### We must distinguish operation science and origin science.

Operation v Origin

##### Operation science (defined) is also called experimental science.

Op Sc  
(2 slides)

##### Origin science (defined) is also called historical science. It investigates history.

Origin Sc  
(2 slides)

##### The difference can be compared to a car mechanic who knows how to operate a vehicle in contrast to a car manufacturer that makes the car—its origin.

Car

### Subject: So where did the idea of millions of years come from?

Subject

(For thousands of years, all people believed the planet was thousands of years old until the late 1700s when there came…)

# I. New Theories of Earth History (1770-1830)

MP

From Terry Mortenson, “‘Deep Time’ and the Church’s Compromise: Historical Background” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth,* Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, eds. (Green Forest, AZ: Master Books, 2008), 79-104 (abbreviated “CTGWG”).

CTGWG

## Comte de Buffon cooling earth, 75,000 years (CTGWG, 81)

Laplace  
(2 slides)

Buffon

## Pierre Laplace nebular hypothesis, long ages (CTGWG, 81-82)

## Jean Lamarck biological evolution, long ages (CTGWG, 82)

Werner

Lamarck

## Abraham Werner receding ocean, 1 million years (CTGWG, 82)

Hutton

Lyell

## James Hutton uniformitarianism, no beginning (CTGWG, 82)

Cuvier

## Georges Cuvier catastrophism, millions of years (CTGWG, 83)

## William Smith fossils date rocks, millions of years (CTGWG, 83)

Smith

## Charles Lyell uniformitarianism, millions of years (CTGWG, 85)

## Summing up, the old-earth theories said long ages produces the earth.

Old Earth Summary

## So there existed three views of Earth History in the early 19th century

Early 19th Century

Catastrophist view

• Cat View

SB-----------C-------------C---------------C--------------C-------------C-------------C----------P

(millions of years)

Uniformitarian view

• Uni View

SB?----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------P

(millions of years)

• Biblical View

Biblical view

SCW------F---------------------P

(ca. 6000 years)

SCW = Supernatural Creation Week

SB = Supernatural Beginning

F = (Noah’s) Flood

C = Catastrophic (Flood)

P = Present

# II. Christian Responses in the Early 19th Century Mostly Compromised

MP

• Comp.

Chalmers

Faber

Miller

## Compromise with millions of years was common.

### Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847): **gap theory** (CTGWG, 94)

### George Stanley Faber (1773-1854): **day-age theory** (CTGWG, 95)

### Hugh Miller (1802-1856): **gap theory** then **day-age theory**

### William Buckland (1784-1868) & Adam Sedgwick (1786-1873): Global, but geologically **limited** Flood (CTGWG, 84)

B & S

Fleming

### John Fleming (1785-1857): global **peaceful** flood (CTGWG, 95)

### John Pye Smith (1774-1851): **local** flood (CTGWG, 95)

Smith

### Liberal theologians: Genesis 1–11 is **myth** (CTGWG, 96)

Liberals Myth

### So various early 1800s theories compromised with old-earth geology.

Summary

## However, Scriptural Geologists did defend the Bible (ca. 1820-1850; CTGWG, 94)

YEC

### These 30 Young Earth Creationists held to the Bible’s depiction of a young earth in Genesis 1’s literal days, and a normal reading of the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11.

Book

### However, they were the minority. This is explained in Mortenson, *The Great Turning Point* (Master Books, 2004).

MP

# (But what was the real issue here? Was it science? No…)

# IV. The Real Nature of the Debate: Philosophical and Religious

• MP

## Three views fought for the minds and hearts of people.

Deism

• Atheism

• Christian

### Deism sees God as separate from the universe and uninvolved after creating it.

### Atheism claims there is not God at all—only a self-making universe.

### Christianity, like deism, sees God as separate from the universe—but entering it.

## Old-earth theology was deism or atheism (CTGWG, 92)

OE Theology

### Buffon: deist or vague theist or maybe a secret atheist

• Buffon

### Laplace: open atheist

• Laplace

### Lamarck: deist or atheist

• Hutton

• Lamarck

### Hutton: deist or atheist (CTGWG, 82)

### Cuvier: deist or vague theist

• Cuvier

### Smith: deist or vague theist

• Smith

### Lyell: deist or Unitarian

• Lyell

### Hutton

#### “The past history of our globe must be explained by what can be seen to be happening now … No powers are to be employed that are not natural to the globe, no action to be admitted except those of which we know the principle.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Hutton 1

#### “But, surely, general deluges form no part of the theory of the earth; for, the purpose of this earth is evidently to maintain vegetable and animal life, and not to destroy them.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Hutton 2

Present

#### Hutton’s Principle: the **present** is the key to the **past**.

Revelation

#### Scriptural geologists: **Revelation** is the key to the **past** and present.

#### Early 19th Century Views…

Summary

### Lyell

Non-existence

#### “I have always been strongly impressed with the weight of an observation of an excellent writer and skillful geologist who said that ‘for the sake of revelation as well as of science—of truth in every form—the physical part of Geological inquiry ought to be conducted as if the Scriptures were not in existence’”[[3]](#footnote-3) (CTGWG, 90).

• Free from Moses

#### Lyell said he wanted to “free the science [of geology] from Moses” (CTGWG, 91).

### So what would the latter 19th century church do with uniformitarian naturalism? What were they really saying then—and now?

Uniform

#### The old-earth geologist stands on his naturalistic assumptions. In contrast, the Christian stands on biblical assumptions.

Assumption

#### The old-earth geologist beckons the Christian to come to what he deems “neutral territory.”

Neutral Ground

#### Christians often fall for this by tossing aside what Scripture says in order to be seen as being objective.

Toss Bible

##### However, the old-earth geologist doesn’t budge, never considering that the Bible could be trusted.

##### He rejects the only eyewitness testimony—that of the Creator—and maintains his assumption that the earth came into being without any intelligence or design.

#### Remember that operation science is repeatable and testable—which cannot be applied to origins. Only origin science can be used to find our where we came from.

Operation v Origin

Naturalistic

##### Naturalistic assumptions lead us to an old earth with no global Flood.

• Biblical

##### Biblical assumptions lead us to a young earth with Noah’s global Flood.

##### It’s a battle of worldviews.

• Worldview

(So how did pastors and theologians in the latter 1800s respond to these claims of millions of years? The situation did not get any better. The voice of the Scriptural Geologists was drowned out and many influential Christian leaders compromised with the millions of years idea.

Man & Scroll

They were warned in 1 Timothy 6:20-21, "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter, and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.”

1 Tim 6

Sadly, instead of standing on the authority of the Word of God, believers of the latter half of the 19th century continued beliieving in millions of years. By the time Darwin published in 1859, the biblical opposition had already been neutralized, as biblical scholars were characterized by…)

MP

# V. Post-1850 Compromise (beware of 1 Tim. 6:20-21)

Spurgeon 1

## Charles Spurgeon (1855 sermon; CTGWG, 96)

“Can any man tell me when the beginning was? Years ago we thought the beginning of this world was when Adam came upon it; but we have discovered that thousands of years before that God was preparing chaotic matter to make it a fit abode for man, putting races of creatures upon it, who might die and leave behind the marks of his handiwork and marvelous skill, before he tried his hand on man.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

Spurgeon 2

## C. I. Scofield (*Scofield Reference Bible*, 1909)

Scofield

### “The first creative act refers to the dateless past, and gives scope for all the geologic ages. … Relegate fossils to the primitive creation, and no conflict of science with the Genesis cosmogony remains.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

### That statement is all Scofield said about the gap (1917 edition). No argument, nothing. Just a bald assertion. The 1967 edition said at v. 1, “Scripture gives no data for determining how long ago the universe was created.” At v. 2, it gives two weak statements for the gap theory.

### *The Scofield Reference Bible* (revised in 1967 and still in print) has been used by tens of millions of Christians worldwide, many of whom act as if Scofield's notes are as inspired as the biblical text.

## Princeton Seminary (CTGWG, 97)

Princeton

### Charles Hodge (1779-1878) initially favored the gap theory, then by 1860 the day-age. He was adamantly opposed to Darwinism, but not theistic evolution!

• Charles Hodge

### His son, A.A. Hodge, toyed with belief in evolution, was open to the gap or day-age theories but not sure if Gen. 1-11 was history.

• A. A. Hodge

### B. B. Warfield (1851-1921) was open to theistic evolution, but not of man, but not sure about origins.

• Warfield

## R. A. Torrey, ed., *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915)

Torrey

### 6 of 90 articles dealt with Genesis and science. 2 clearly rejected evolution as unbiblical. 2 opposed atheistic evolution and human evolution, but didn't clearly reject theistic evolution of animals and plants. 3 of the 6 clearly accepted millions of years and none of the other 3 clearly affirmed the Bible's teaching on the age of the creation.

### R. A. (Reuben Archer) Torrey (1856-1928) was an American evangelist, pastor, educator, and writer. Held evangelistic meetings around the world; called by D.L. Moody to head the Bible Institute of the Chicago Evangelization Society (now Moody Bible Institute); Dean of Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA); pastorates included Chicago Avenue Church (now Moody Memorial Church) and Church of the Open Door, Los Angeles. Wrote more than forty books.

### In 1909 Lyman and Milton Stewart, two wealthy Presbyterian businessmen, financed the publication and mailing of 12 volumes of 68 articles, collectively called *The Fundamentals*. They were written by some of the leading godly Bible-believing pastors and scholars of the day (from Amer., Can., UK, Germany and from Anglican, Presbyt., Method., Baptist and non-denom. --several were editors of Scofield Bible) and edited by Dr. R.A. Torrey. These articles defended the Christian faith against the onslaught of rationalism and liberal theology invading the churches.

### Three million individual volumes of *The Fundamentals* were sent free of charge to pastors, missionaries, Sunday School superintendents and other Christian workers throughout the English-speaking world. All but a few of the articles were republished in 4 volumes in 1917.

### 64 of the 68 articles are great defenses of orthodox Christian doctrines. But the 4 articles dealing with science were all compromised with millions of years.

Templeton

## Charles Templeton (1915-2001)

### Started and pastored a church in Toronto

### 1945—became VP of Youth for Christ

### 1946—designated “best used of God” by Nat. Assoc. of Evang.

### During these years growing doubts about Gen. 1-11 because of accepting millions of years and evolution

### 1948—began studies at Princeton seminary, which only increased his doubts about the authority of Scripture, the historical accuracy of Genesis and the deity of Christ.

### After Princeton he continued preaching with the National Council of Churches. He had increasing health problems, esp. chest pains. A doctor said there was nothing physically wrong with him and suggested that the symptoms were the result of his inner conflict about doubting Scripture even as he preached it to others.

### 1957—left the ministry to be a secular journalist and author, resulting in *Farewell to God*

• Farewell to God

### 1996 in *Farewell to God*— "I believe that there is no supreme being with human attributes—no God in the biblical sense—but that life is the result of timeless evolutionary forces, having reached its present transient state over millions of years."

Templeton Quote

### 2001—died as an atheist after suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

### Do you see the downward slide? Old earth to wondering about theistic evolution to accepting it to apostate.

Princeton Slope

## C. John Collins (OT prof at Covenant Theo. Seminary, editor of OT notes in *ESV Study Bible*)

Collins

“I conclude, then that I have no reason to disbelieve the standard theories of the geologists, including their estimate for the age of the earth. They may be wrong, for all I know; but if they are wrong, it’s not because they have improperly smuggled philosophical assumptions into their work”[[6]](#footnote-6) (CTGWG, 93-94).

## Norman Geisler (philosopher, Veritas Evangelical Seminary)

Geisler

“The problem is deepened by the fact that there is *prima facie* evidence to indicate that the days of Genesis are indeed twenty-four-hour periods. … Most scientific evidence sets the age of the world at billions of years.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

## Wayne Grudem (theology professor, Phoenix Seminary)

Grudem

“Although our conclusions are tentative, at this point in our understanding, Scripture seems to be more easily understood to *suggest* (but not to require) a young earth view, while the observable facts of creation seem increasingly to favor an old earth view.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

• MI

## Bruce Waltke (OT professor, Reformed Theological Seminary, FL)

Waltke

Subj

(So where did the idea of millions of years come from? Here is where we started today—do you know the answer now?)

# Conclusion

### The idea of millions of years came not from science or the Bible—but from anti-God philosophy (Main Idea).

### The age of the earth is not a side issue as the gospel hangs on Genesis.

Cross  
(19 slides)

### The bottom line: Do we fear God or fear man?

Ps 40:4; Prov 29:25

#### “Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods” (Ps. 40:4 NIV)

#### “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe” (Prov. 29:25 NIV).

### Don’t have any evangelical popes!

#### Like Martin Luther who nailed his 95 theses to the wall of the Church of Wittenberg in 1517 upholding Scripture against the teachings of his day, so we must do the same today in a different arena.

Nail thesis to wall

#### That arena is to adopt the “Seven C’s of History” where the first four stages of history stem from Genesis, not evolution and its millions of years.

7 Cs

# Resources by Dr. Terry Mortenson

*The Great Turning Point* (Master Books, 2004)

“‘Deep Time’ and the Church’s Compromise: Historical Background” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, eds. (Green Forest, AZ: Master Books, 2008), 79-104 (abbreviated “CTGWG”).

“Millions of Years: where did the idea come from?” (1-hour DVD)

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

# Questions

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Text

# Possible Illustrations

### Text

# Possible Applications

### Text

# Original Answers in Genesis Notes

# Millions of Years: Where Did the Idea Come From?

Dr. Terry Mortenson, Answers in Genesis

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1. Introduction
   1. Battle of ideas: 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Col. 2:8
   2. Defining “science”: Operation science vs Origin science

A few evolutionists admit this distinction

“Evolution is a historical process that cannot be proven by the same arguments and methods by which purely physical or functional phenomena can be documented.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

1. New Theories of Earth History (1770-1830)
   1. Comte de Buffon **cooling earth, 75,000 years** (CTGWG, 81)
   2. Pierre Laplace **nebular hypothesis, long ages**  (CTGWG, 81-82)
   3. Jean Lamarck **biological evolution, long ages** (CTGWG, 82)
   4. Abraham Werner **receding ocean, 1 million years** (CTGWG, 82)
   5. James Hutton **uniformitarianism, no beginning** (CTGWG, 82)
   6. Georges Cuvier **catastrophism, millions of years** (CTGWG, 83)
   7. William Smith **fossils date rocks, millions of years** (CTGWG, 83)
   8. Charles Lyell **uniformitarianism, millions of years** (CTGWG, 85)

**Three Views of Earth History in early 19th century**

Biblical view

SCW------F---------------------P

(ca. 6000 years)

Catastrophist view

SB-----------C-------------C---------------C--------------C-------------C-------------C----------P

(millions of years)

Uniformitarian view

SB?----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------P

(millions of years)

**SCW = Supernatural Creation Week**

**SB = Supernatural Beginning**

**F = (Noah’s) Flood**

**C = Catastrophic (Flood)**

**P = Present**

1. Christian compromise views in early 19th century
   1. Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847): **gap theory** (CTGWG, 94)
   2. George Stanley Faber (1773-1854): **day-age theory** (CTGWG, 95)
   3. Hugh Miller (1802-1856): **gap theory** then **day-age theory**
   4. William Buckland (1784-1868) & Adam Sedgwick (1786-1873):

Global, but geologically **limited** Flood (CTGWG, 84)

* 1. John Fleming (1785-1857): global **peaceful** flood (CTGWG, 95)
  2. John Pye Smith (1774-1851): **local** flood (CTGWG, 95)
  3. Liberal theologians: Genesis 1–11 is **myth** (CTGWG, 96)

1. Scriptural geologists (ca. 1820-1850; CTGWG, 94)

See Mortenson, *The Great Turning Point* (Master Books, 2004)

1. Nature of the debate: philosophical and religious
   1. Deism b. Atheism c. Christianity
2. Old-earth theology (CTGWG, 92)
   1. Buffon: **deist** or vague theist or maybe a secret atheist
   2. Laplace: open **atheist**
   3. Lamarck: deist or **atheist**
   4. Hutton: **deist** or atheist (CTGWG, 82)
   5. Cuvier: deist or **vague** theist
   6. Smith: **deist** or vague theist
   7. Lyell: **deist** or Unitarian

Hutton:

“The past history of our globe must be explained by what can be seen to be happening now … No powers are to be employed that are not natural to the globe, no action to be admitted except those of which we know the principle.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

“But, surely, general deluges form no part of the theory of the earth; for, the purpose of this earth is evidently to maintain vegetable and animal life, and not to destroy them.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

Principle: the **present** is the key to the **past**.

Scriptural geologists: **Revelation** is the key to the **past** and present.

Lyell

*Principles of Geology: being an attempt to explain the former changes of the Earth’s surface, by reference to causes now in operation* (London: John Murray, 1830)

“I have always been strongly impressed with the weight of an observation of an excellent writer and skillful geologist who said that ‘for the sake of revelation as well as of science—of truth in every form—the physical part of Geological inquiry ought to be conducted as if the Scriptures were not in existence’”[[12]](#footnote-12) (CTGWG, 90).

Lyell said he wanted to “free the science [of geology] from **Moses**” (CTGWG, 91).

1. Post-1850 compromise (beware: 1 Tim. 6:20-21)
   1. Charles Spurgeon (1855 sermon; CTGWG, 96)

“Can any man tell me when the beginning was? Years ago we thought the beginning of this world was when Adam came upon it; but we have discovered that thousands of years before that God was preparing chaotic matter to make it a fit abode for man, putting races of creatures upon it, who might die and leave behind the marks of his handiwork and marvelous skill, before he tried his hand on man.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

* 1. C. I. Scofield (Scofield Reference Bible, 1909)

“The first creative act refers to the dateless past, and gives scope for all the geologic ages. … Relegate fossils to the primitive creation, and no conflict of science with the Genesis cosmogony remains.”[[14]](#footnote-14)

* 1. Princeton Seminary (CTGWG, 97)  
     1. Charles Hodge (1779-1878)
     2. A. A. Hodge (1823-1886)
     3. B. B. Warfield (1851-1921)
  2. R. A. Torrey, ed., *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915)
  3. Charles Templeton (1915-2001)
  4. C. John Collins (OT prof at Covenant Theological Seminary, editor of OT notes in ESV Study Bible)

“I conclude, then that I have no reason to disbelieve the standard theories of the geologists, including their estimate for the age of the earth. They may be wrong, for all I know; but if they are wrong, it’s not because they have improperly smuggled philosophical assumptions into their work”[[15]](#footnote-15) (CTGWG, 93-94).

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“Although our conclusions are tentative, at this point in our understanding, Scripture seems to be more easily understood to *suggest* (but not to require) a young earth view, while the observable facts of creation seem increasingly to favor an old earth view.”[[17]](#footnote-17)

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“Blessed is the man

who makes the LORD his trust,

who does not look to the proud,

to those who turn aside to false gods” (Ps. 40:4 NIV)

“Fear of man will prove to be a snare,

but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe” (Prov. 29:25 NIV).

1. Don’t have any evangelical **popes!**

“What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness?   
4Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written:

  ‘So that you may be proved right when you speak

and prevail when you judge’” (Rom. 3:3-4 NIV)

1. Resources
   1. Terry Mortenson, *The Great Turning Point* (Master Books, 2004)
   2. Chapter 3 of Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, eds., *Coming to Grips with Genesis* (Master Books, 2008)
   3. Terry Mortenson, “Millions of Years: where did the idea come from?” (1-hour DVD)—very similar to this lecture.

**Title**

***Passage***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*:

# I.

# II.

# III.

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will believe in a young earth.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Millions of Years: Where Did the Idea Come From?

Dr. Terry Mortenson, Answers in Genesis

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### Interest: Singapore is 50 years old today—how did we get this high in such a short time?

### Need: The age of the earth is a huge debate today—how did we get this low in such a short time?

#### We are in a battle of ideas: 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Col. 2:8

#### We must distinguish operation science and origin science

##### Operation science

##### Origin science

### Subject: So where did the idea of millions of years come from?

(For thousands of years, all people believed the planet was thousands of years old until…)

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(ca. 6000 years)

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## However, Scriptural Geologists did defend the Bible (ca. 1820-1850; CTGWG, 94)

See Mortenson, *The Great Turning Point* (Master Books, 2004)

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## Three views fought for the minds and hearts of people.

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## Princeton Seminary (CTGWG, 97)

### Charles Hodge (1779-1878)

### A. A. Hodge (1823-1886)

### B. B. Warfield (1851-1921)

## R. A. Torrey, ed., *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915)

## Charles Templeton (1915-2001)

## C. John Collins (OT prof at Covenant Theo. Seminary, editor of OT notes in *ESV Study Bible*)

“I conclude, then that I have no reason to disbelieve the standard theories of the geologists, including their estimate for the age of the earth. They may be wrong, for all I know; but if they are wrong, it’s not because they have improperly smuggled philosophical assumptions into their work”[[23]](#footnote-23) (CTGWG, 93-94).

## Norman Geisler (philosopher, Veritas Evangelical Seminary)

“The problem is deepened by the fact that there is *prima facie* evidence to indicate that the days of Genesis are indeed twenty-four-hour periods. … Most scientific evidence sets the age of the world at billions of years.”[[24]](#footnote-24)

## Wayne Grudem (theology professor, Phoenix Seminary)

“Although our conclusions are tentative, at this point in our understanding, Scripture seems to be more easily understood to *suggest* (but not to require) a young earth view, while the observable facts of creation seem increasingly to favor an old earth view.”[[25]](#footnote-25)

## Bruce Waltke (OT professor, Reformed Theological Seminary, FL)

(So where did the idea of millions of years come from?)

# Conclusion

### The idea of millions of years came not from science or the Bible—but from anti-God philosophy (MI).

### The bottom line: Do we fear God or fear man?

#### “Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods” (Ps. 40:4 NIV)

#### “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe” (Prov. 29:25 NIV).

### Don’t have any evangelical popes!

“What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: ‘So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge’” (Rom. 3:3-4 NIV)

# Resources

Terry Mortenson, *The Great Turning Point* (Master Books, 2004)

Chapter 3 of Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, eds., *Coming to Grips with Genesis* (Master Books, 2008)

Terry Mortenson, “Millions of Years: where did the idea come from?” (1-hour DVD)



**Rick Griffith**

9 August 2015

Message 6 of 10

# Millions of Years: Where Did the Idea Come From?

**Dr. Terry Mortenson, Answers in Genesis**

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# Introduction

### Singapore is 50 years old today—how did we get this *high* in such a short time?

### The earth’s age is debated today—how did we get this *low* in such a short time?

#### We are in a battle of ideas: 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Col. 2:8

#### We must distinguish operation science and origin science.

### Subject: So where did the idea of millions of years come from?

# I. New Theories of Earth History (1770-1830)

1. Comte de Buffon: cooling earth, 75,000 years (CTGWG, 81)
2. Pierre Laplace: nebular hypothesis, long ages (CTGWG, 81-82)
3. Jean Lamarck: biological evolution, long ages (CTGWG, 82)
4. Abraham Werner: receding ocean, 1 million years (CTGWG, 82)
5. James Hutton: uniformitarianism, no beginning (CTGWG, 82)
6. Georges Cuvier: catastrophism, millions of years (CTGWG, 83)
7. William Smith: fossils date rocks, millions of years (CTGWG, 83)
8. Charles Lyell: uniformitarianism, millions of years (CTGWG, 85)

**Three Views of Earth History in early 19th century**

Catastrophist view

SB-----------C-------------C---------------C--------------C-------------C-------------C----------P

(millions of years)

Uniformitarian view

SB?----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------P

(millions of years)

SCW = Supernatural Creation Week

SB = Supernatural Beginning

F = (Noah’s) Flood

C = Catastrophic (Flood)

P = Present

Biblical view

SCW------F---------------------P

(ca. 6000 years)

# II. Christian Responses in the Early 19th Century Mostly Compromised

## Compromise with millions of years was common.

1. Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847): **gap theory** (CTGWG, 94)
2. George Stanley Faber (1773-1854): **day-age theory** (CTGWG, 95)
3. Hugh Miller (1802-1856): **gap theory** then **day-age theory**
4. William Buckland (1784-1868) & Adam Sedgwick (1786-1873): Global, but geologically **limited** Flood (CTGWG, 84)
5. John Fleming (1785-1857): global **peaceful** flood (CTGWG, 95)
6. John Pye Smith (1774-1851): **local** flood (CTGWG, 95)
7. Liberal theologians: Genesis 1–11 is **myth** (CTGWG, 96)

## However, Scriptural Geologists did defend the Bible (ca. 1820-1850; CTGWG, 94)

# IV. The Real Nature of the Debate: Philosophical and Religious

## Three views fought for the minds and hearts of people.

Deism Atheism Christianity

## Old-earth theology was deism or atheism (CTGWG, 92)

#### Hutton’s Principle: the **present** is the key to the **past**.

#### Scriptural geologists: **Revelation** is the key to the **past** and present.

# V. Post-1850 Compromise (beware of 1 Tim. 6:20-21)

## Charles Spurgeon (1855 sermon; CTGWG, 96)

## C. I. Scofield (*Scofield Reference Bible*, 1909)

## Princeton Seminary (CTGWG, 97)

## R. A. Torrey, ed., *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915)

## Charles Templeton (1915-2001)

## C. John Collins (OT prof at Covenant Theo. Seminary, editor of OT notes in *ESV Study Bible*)

## Norman Geisler (philosopher, Veritas Evangelical Seminary)

## Wayne Grudem (theology professor, Phoenix Seminary)

## Bruce Waltke (OT professor, Reformed Theological Seminary, FL)

# Conclusion

### Millions of years came not from science or the Bible—but from anti-God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Main Idea).

### The bottom line: Do we fear God or fear man?

### Don’t have any evangelical popes!

# Resources by Dr. Terry Mortenson

*The Great Turning Point* (Master Books, 2004)

“‘Deep Time’ and the Church’s Compromise: Historical Background” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, eds. (Green Forest, AZ: Master Books, 2008), 79-104 (abbreviated “CTGWG”).

“Millions of Years: where did the idea come from?” (1-hour DVD)

1. Quoted in A. Holmes, *Principles of Physical Geology*, (UK: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1965), 43–44. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. James Hutton, *Theory of the Earth* (1795), 1:273. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Charles Lyell, Lecture II at King’s College London on 4 May 1832, quoted in Martin J.S. Rudwick, “Charles Lyell Speaks in the Lecture Theatre,” *The British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. IX, Pt. 2, No. 32 (July 1976), 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Charles Spurgeon, “Election,” *The New Park Street Pulpit* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publ. 1990 of sermon delivered 2 Sept. 1855), 1:318. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. C. I. Scofield, *The Holy Bible* (Lake Wylie, SC: Christian Heritage, 1917), pp. 3-4. This *Scofield Reference Bible* was first published in 1909. This comment remained in the notes of subsequent editions for many decades. The notes of the 1967 third edition are modified in several places in Genesis 1, but still are worded in such a way that they leave the door wide open to the acceptance of the big bang and millions of years. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. C. John Collins, *Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), p. 250. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 270 and 272. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 307 (italics in the original). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ernst Mayr, *What Evolution is* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Quoted in A. Holmes, *Principles of Physical Geology*, (UK: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1965), pp. 43–44. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. James Hutton, *Theory of the Earth* (1795), vol. 1, p. 273. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Charles Lyell, Lecture II at King’s College London on 4 May 1832, quoted in Martin J.S. Rudwick, “Charles Lyell Speaks in the Lecture Theatre,” *The British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. IX, Pt. 2, No. 32 (July 1976), p. 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Charles Spurgeon, “Election,” *The New Park Street Pulpit* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publ. 1990), Vol. 1, (sermon delivered 2 Sept. 1855), 318. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. C.I. Scofield, *The Holy Bible* (Lake Wylie, SC: Christian Heritage, 1917), pp. 3-4. This *Scofield Reference Bible* was first published in 1909. This comment remained in the notes of subsequent editions for many decades. The notes of the 1967 third edition are modified in several places in Genesis 1, but still are worded in such a way that they leave the door wide open to the acceptance of the big bang and millions of years. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. C. John Collins, *Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), p. 250. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), pp. 270 and 272. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Downers Grove: IVPress, 1994), p. 307 (italics in the original). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Quoted in A. Holmes, *Principles of Physical Geology*, (UK: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1965), 43–44. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. James Hutton, *Theory of the Earth* (1795), 1:273. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Charles Lyell, Lecture II at King’s College London on 4 May 1832, quoted in Martin J.S. Rudwick, “Charles Lyell Speaks in the Lecture Theatre,” *The British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. IX, Pt. 2, No. 32 (July 1976), 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Charles Spurgeon, “Election,” *The New Park Street Pulpit* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publ. 1990 of sermon delivered 2 Sept. 1855), 1:318. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. C. I. Scofield, *The Holy Bible* (Lake Wylie, SC: Christian Heritage, 1917), pp. 3-4. This *Scofield Reference Bible* was first published in 1909. This comment remained in the notes of subsequent editions for many decades. The notes of the 1967 third edition are modified in several places in Genesis 1, but still are worded in such a way that they leave the door wide open to the acceptance of the big bang and millions of years. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. C. John Collins, *Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), p. 250. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 270 and 272. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 307 (italics in the original). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)