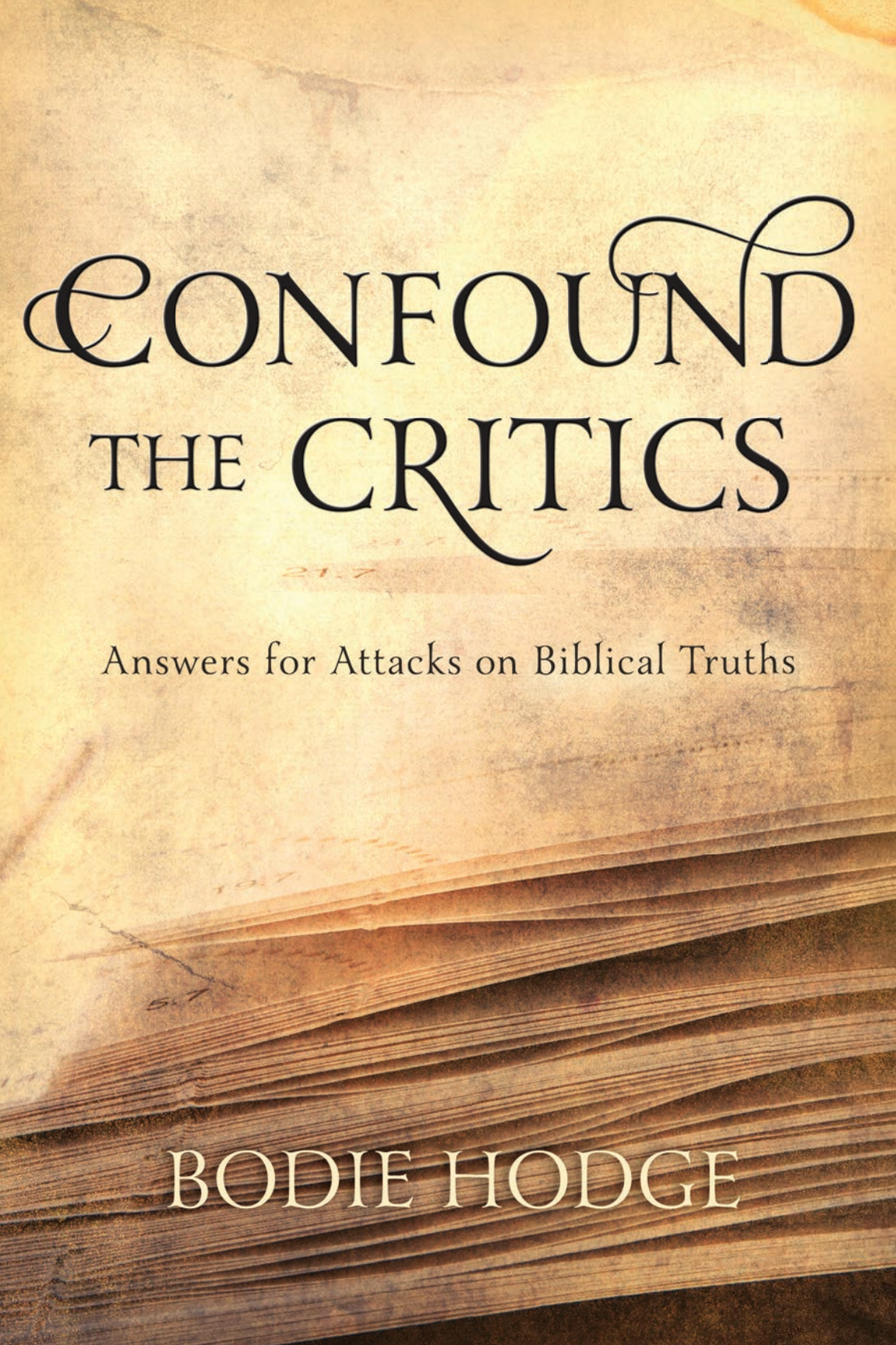
CONFOUND
THE CRITICS
Answers for Attacks on Biblical Truths
BODIE HODGE

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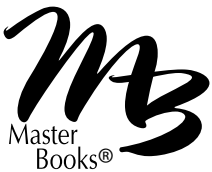

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Section 3: How to respond to people on topics about biblical authority, theology, and compromised positions

Introduction

How can this book help me?

For years, hosts of people have asked Answers in Genesis to help them reply to newspapers, opinions, internet websites such as blogs or debate boards, books, DVDs, and other media by non-Christians who are attacking creation or other aspects of the Bible, the character of God, or Christianity in general. Many of these attacks are rather hostile in their approach, and Christians really struggle with answering many of the claims.

Many Christians have written books that help people answer these questions, and I've been a part of some of these books (e.g., *The New Answers Book* series, Ken Ham, gen. ed.; *How Do We Know the Bible Is True?* series, Ken Ham and Bodie Hodge, gen. eds.; *Demolishing Supposed Bible Contradictions* series, Ken Ham, Bodie Hodge, and Tim Chaffey, gen. eds.). Some Christians have written books that discuss the theory behind how to answer (e.g., *Always Ready*, Dr. Greg Bahnsen; *The Ultimate Proof of Creation*, Dr. Jason Lisle), but this book is unique in that it helps put the theory and answers into practice. By the way, these books that I just mentioned, I highly recommend.

For example, let's use a game to provide a good analogy. Let's say you want to play pool. You can study the science of momentum about how balls move and interact with each other. You can even study the various games (8-ball or 9-ball) and learn all about them, and this is good, but until you put what you've learned into practice, that knowledge does you little good. You need to be able to hit the pool ball into the pocket when the time comes.

That is the thrust of this book. It is to help show you *how* to use the answers and *how* to use the theory when the time comes. I do this by giving you practical examples of situations that I've been in and how I responded when the time came. So hopefully, these examples will help you apply answers when the time comes for you. Consider some verses to get you going:

> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5; ESV).

> But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

> having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame (1 Peter 3:15–16; ESV).
>
> See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ (Colossians 2:8; ESV).

Stats

At the ministry of Answers in Genesis, we receive a large volume of correspondence that needs a response. In the years that I strictly worked correspondence, we received about 10,000 to 16,000 emails, phone calls, and written letters. One year, I did some statistics on the emails and found that about 6.5 percent were hostile non-Christians (mostly atheists and agnostics or other forms of humanism). And sadly, about 3 percent were from hostile Christians (mostly those who believed in an old earth and/or evolution and mixed it with the Bible)!

If this percentage is largely accurate (and it seems consistent with other years as well), that means we've had to deal with about 950 to 1,520 negative correspondences per year! Reading such diatribes can get you down, but you need to look at it as an opportunity to witness to people and help correct them where they have misunderstood biblical Christianity. Don't take such attacks personally, but remember:

> "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me [Jesus] before it hated you" (John 15:18).

Getting started in a response: a few helpful hints

As I dealt with quite a bit of hostile correspondence, I realized that I needed to look at this as a positive. I had an opportunity to reach out to an unbeliever, or perhaps a compromised Christian.[1] I needed to be discerning for several reasons. Up front, it is our responsibility to get the person to realize the importance of Christ for their lives and repent (2 Peter 3:9), or *if they*

1. A compromised Christian is a Christian, but he has allowed another worldview or religion to infiltrate his Christianity (think of when the Israelites mixed true worship with Baal worship). The most common way this happens today is by giving up the straightforward reading of Genesis 1–11 and replacing it with aspects of the religion of humanism. Some compromised Christians buy into geological evolution (millions of years), astronomical evolution (big bang or other old universe worldviews), chemical evolution (chemical origin of life), or biological evolution (man evolved from single-celled organisms).

are a Christian to realize the importance of God's Word in their lives *as the authority in all areas* (2 Timothy 3:16).

Discernment in general

First, you need to be able to determine the stance of the writer of a negative letter. Is the writer a Christian, atheist, compromised Christian, Mormon, Hindu, Islamic, angry, sad, mocking, etc.? This will help you determine how to reply. And you need to keep in mind that these people are *not* the enemy, but that the false philosophy has taken them captive (Colossians 2:8).

Discernment about their view of the Bible

Also, you need to be discerning about how they might *view* the Bible. If they appear to believe the Bible, then use Scripture (and a lot of it!) and set up the debate as *that faulty belief system* vs. *God's Word*. By setting it up as "a viewpoint vs. Bible," they should be helped to realize that it is really about a "false philosophy vs. God." It takes the battle away from "you vs. them" and puts it where it should be: God, demolishing the false view (Hebrews 4:12). Many of these people do not realize that they have bought into a secularly biased worldview, or if they do realize it, they fail to realize why it is wrong or inconsistent, especially with God's Word.

If they don't seem to believe the Bible or even mock it, you should still use it but make sure to address why it can be trusted, using things like "presuppositional apologetics" or other aspects of the ultimate proof (don't let this scare you, as these are addressed in some of the books I've previously mentioned).[2] Essentially, you need to "pull the rug out" from underneath the unbeliever's worldview by showing how they are borrowing from a biblical worldview to even make their case and, hence, revealing that the Bible is true whether they have realized it or not.

Discerning the real issue

Next, we need to answer the *underlying* issue. We need to read between the lines and realize ***why*** they are asking the questions/sending the hostile letter. Often, answering the questions won't address ***why*** they don't trust the Bible and ultimately Jesus Christ (e.g., I've repeatedly answered people's questions, only to have them turn and ask more, showing that the questions they asked *originally* were not causing them to stumble but something greater, perhaps

2. To understand this presuppositional, ultimate proof approach, it may be good to read from *Always Ready* by Dr. Greg Bahnsen or *The Ultimate Proof of Creation* by Dr. Jason Lisle, though this is not entirely needed for this book.

more foundational). You need to address this issue if possible. Sometimes they will lash out with a number of questions, but these are usually not the main reason they are struggling. We need to try to figure out and address the root of the issues they are having.

Often people misspell things or use poor grammar, but be gracious on such points. It is better to talk about the real issues behind the letter, than to point out little things like that, but always try to use good grammar, spelling, and punctuation when you respond. As you will surely notice, many of the initial correspondences included in this book contain a great many grammatical errors and misspellings (and these have remained unedited). But even in that category, I'm not without error myself. So please be forgiving to those with whom you are corresponding.

Be patient

It is always good to be sincere and kind, regardless of how much hate and vitriol you may encounter. Again, don't take it personally. I found that when people are angry about an issue, it means they are thinking about it more than others and finding conflict within their own worldview — so they want to lash out and not address it; which is all the more reason for you to point out why their *worldview* is inconsistent, arbitrary, and so on.

From my experience with those who are angry, sometimes it is good to wait at least two weeks to a month to reply. This not only gives them time to "cool off" so that they will be more open to listening, but often they have forgotten about their letter by then, too. Then, when they receive a kind and respectful response, they will often apologize for their rude tone and you can carry on a good conversation.

How many times should you respond?

How many times should you respond to someone who refuses to listen or learn? The Bible tells us:

> But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned (Titus 3:9–11; ESV).

The answer is twice. If you think they are sincere, then continue corresponding, but that will be up to you. But there is a point where it is "casting pearls

to swine" (Matthew 7:6) and you need to "brush the dust from your shoes" (Acts 13:51) and move to on to those who are willing and awaiting answers.

Style: single letter or point-by-point

Before you start your written response, you need to decide if you are going to write one big response (single letter), or break their correspondence into parts and answer each part accordingly (point-by-point). My preference is usually point-by-point when they have multiple claims. This helps you avoid missing something that may be important. Also, there is no confusion over what you are responding to, since it is the section immediately above. When we get into the responses, this should be fairly clear, so if you have never done a point-by-point response, don't fret.

Challenge-riposte: when to use it?

Another thing that needs to be addressed is using a method called "challenge-riposte." This is a debate method that is very aggressive and is appropriate to use *in the right circumstance*. Many who use it today, though, don't use it properly. Let me explain.

The challenge-riposte method is very direct and was used by some biblical persons in rebuking, including Christ. Elijah, for example, used it when taunting the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:27. John the Baptist even called the Pharisees and Sadducees a "brood of vipers" in Matthew 3:7.

Christ "had a go" at the religious leaders (Pharisees) in Matthew 12:1–8. Twice Jesus said, "Haven't you read?" This "stepped up" rebuke by Christ was directed at the people who were learned and even taught the Scriptures, and Jesus basically insulted them when He asked if they had even read the Scriptures on this subject. Christ went so far as to say "Woe to you, hypocrites!" in Matthew 23:15. There are other places in Scripture where rebukes were given, so there is precedence for this method. However, take note of the timing of when this method was used in Scripture. Jesus did not use it the first time He was challenged by the Pharisees. For example, in Luke 5:17–26 Jesus was challenged by the Pharisees for forgiving sins and Jesus kindly responded. He was questioned by the Pharisees regarding eating with tax collectors and sinners in Matthew 9:11, Mark 2:16, and Luke 5:30, and He kindly responded.

It was after the Pharisees continued to disregard Jesus' teaching and continued to oppose Him that Jesus stepped up His response to a challenge-riposte style. This lesson should also be mimicked by Christians. We are to be respectful and gentle in our responses initially as per 1 Peter 3:15. However,

if we are met with continued attacks from the same person, then we can step it up a bit, as Christ did, when challenged publicly. My preference is not to engage in challenge-riposte unless forced into it. To see an instance of this go to appendix 2, "How to Respond to a 'Repeat Offender.' "

Presuppositional approach

Answers in Genesis is a presuppositional, biblical authority ministry. God and His Word are presupposed to be the truth, and the methodology of presuppositional apologetics is truly devastating to false worldviews that are set up to oppose Christ. There is nothing greater than God or His Word. Often, in efforts to share that the Bible is the truth, Christians inadvertently use evidential apologetics[3] (or its sister form of classical apologetics), which ultimately results in man's ideas being the authority over God by starting with something *other* than God.[4]

> Evidential: The evidence proves the Bible (or more appropriately, "Our understanding of the evidence gives a good probability that the Bible is true").
>
> Presuppositional: Evidence is a good confirmation of the Bible.

Closer look: All evidence needs to be interpreted, and there are two ways of doing so — God's way or man's way. In all debates, it is not about the evidence but the worldview by which that evidence is looked at. So it is a religious debate. Let's evaluate these worldviews in light of God's Word. In the first sentence, is God the authority? No. *Man's interpretations* of the evidence are seen as the authority and raised up to be greater than God, since man's interpretations of the evidence are what is trying to dictate whether God's Word is true (Matthew 10:24).

The second sentence uses the Bible as the starting point, and evidence is merely seen in light of God's Word. So God is the authority. This doesn't

---

3. Evidential apologetics does not mean, "using evidence"; in other words, there is a big difference between being evidence heavy and evidential. Evidential apologetics is a methodology of defending the faith by leaving the Bible out of the discussion and trying to develop probabilistic arguments to say the Bible is *likely* true; whereas evidence heavy means you use a lot of evidence. In other words, the Bible is divorced from the discussion of evidence. In presuppositional apologetics, the Bible is never divorced from the evidence but is the absolute authority and basis by which we look at all evidence. For a concise understanding of evidential apologetics see: Evidential Apologetic: Faith Founded on Fact, Bible.org website, February 26, 2006, http://bible.org/seriespage/evidentialist-apologetics-faith-founded-fact.

4. Ken Ham and Bodie Hodge, gen. eds., *How Do We Know the Bible Is True?* Volume 2 (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2012), p. 61–80.

mean evidence is neglected; it is still used as confirmation. In a presuppositional viewpoint, evidence and logic are used, but they are predicated on God's Word.

This short example is only a touch of presuppositional apologetics. In presuppositional apologetics, it is good to spot things in a particular way. Look for the following:

- arbitrariness
- inconsistencies within the opposing worldview
- What must be true for their claims to make sense (preconditions of intelligibility)? Does this worldview have a basis for knowledge, logic, etc.? Are they borrowing from Christian presuppositions to make sense of the world, etc.?
- How does the professed worldview lead to absurdity?

These are good ways to quickly refute the false worldview people often present.

Often evidentialist arguments, whether Christian or non-Christian, *inadvertantly* go back to assuming God's Word is truth. They "can't not," as God is the ultimate authority regardless of what anyone thinks or says. This is because to understand anything means assuming the Bible is true (whether people want to believe it or not). Such things as:

1. Truth, logic, and other nonmaterial entities exist, like information and knowledge.
2. The laws of the universe are uniform, as God has stated (unless in rare instances God works a miracle that may defy such things, which is not arbitrary).[5]
3. Morality has an absolute basis in God's Word.

These things are predicated on God existing and His words being true.

Love the sinner, not the sin

When you are responding to someone, always keep in mind that they are made in the image of God and are your relative. They are not the enemy! It is the false philosophies that they have been taught (that they now believe in) that are the enemy. I like to use the four "Bs" as a guideline in responding:

5. Not all miracles are in defiance of the laws of nature. Many occur as a matter of timing and perhaps others are well within the laws of nature, where we simply do not know *all* the laws operating in the world God created.

1. Be picky.
2. Be biblical.
3. Be kind (and gracious).
4. Be humble.

Be picky because the Bible is picky when it comes to false arguments. In other words, we want to be the best we can be and not let things slide unless we are being gracious on a point (e.g., grammar). Don't be picky for picky's sake though. First Peter 3:15 says to always be prepared to give an answer, it doesn't say always give an answer. Deem when it is inappropriate to respond to a comment. For example, if the person uses foul language, it may be best to not deviate from the original topic to debate the Christian morality of bad words, but focus on the main issues in the debate points.

Ever heard that you are your own worst critic? Be just as critical toward false arguments. As a Christian, you represent Christ and so your best should be the best you can be. Christ never waffled. So do what you can to word things correctly and check your facts and biblical statements.

Always be biblical, even if others oppose the Bible. Don't let them dictate that the Word of God should not be used, when God makes it clear that it should be used (2 Timothy 3:16). Try to be as kind as possible and at the same time gracious, as the Lord showed us grace (Galatians 5:22; 1 Peter 1:13), and let this lead to humbleness. Remember that when it comes down to it, we are all sinners and all compared *to Christ,* who is perfect. We have all fallen short and we need to remain humble when witnessing to others (James 4:10).

Checklist of other points

Here is a checklist for responding:

1. First, check and make sure they include their information in good faith (legitimate name, address, and email address). We do this at Answers in Genesis so that we do not waste our time answering long emails from Charles Darwin with the address of the North Pole. If you work in ministry (church, organization, and so on), this may be a good policy to have in place; for the rest, this may not be a big deal. The point is to make sure the address they give you for a response (email, phone, or letter) is legitimate. If not, then don't bother spending the time. I once answered a long letter, only to realize that the letter came from "Satan" with an address of "Hell." (The post office, I realized, was not interested in delivering mail

there — perhaps that is one of the punishments of being in hell. Okay, you are allowed to smile at that one.)

2. Pray for them.
3. Do the discerning — what do they believe, how do they view the Bible and God, what is their real issue?
4. Check each "fact" that they claim. If they didn't send documentation for it, ask for it.
5. Check each journal, article, or web link on anything they claim and read about it in detail. If they don't send it, ask them for it. This helps avoid "answering a fool according to his folly." In other words, don't buy into a false claim and then try to answer.[6]
6. When checking their facts and articles, check and see where they break logic by reviewing the logic list in appendix A or books on logic (*Discerning Truth*, Dr. Jason Lisle, or *The Fallacy Detective*, Nathaniel and Hans Bluedorn). It is always good to point out the specific fallacy *with kindness*, as it helps them learn how to think (especially considering that precious few people have been taught logic nowadays since an evolutionary worldview causes people to violate many laws of logic).
7. Also, open the reply by thanking them for contacting you and telling them that your response is said with sincerity and respect (1 Peter 3:15). And be humble, as we have all fallen short too and in many instances have been in their shoes as well. We need to show the same grace to the unbeliever as Christ showed to us.
8. *Usually* respond via "point-by-point" analysis, addressing each point, questioning their conclusions if they are not biblical, and inserting Scripture. It is often good to include the verse so they can read it as opposed to simply mentioning the reference. Sadly, few actually look up the verse. I realize that writing out the Scriptures can't always be done, though. Do not do any of this in a judging way but be bold and use sincerity to rebuke them by using the discerning factions in #3.
9. Check and link to the facts that you present. Use articles and books as supplements, not as the basis. Make the argument and give

6. Dr. Jason Lisle, "Fool-Proof Apologetics," *Answers* magazine, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 66–69, http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v4/n2/fool-proof.

them the biblical reasons, then use articles as *backup* for further information. Double check what you write and even get a second or third set of eyes on it to be sure it is biblically and scientifically correct.

10. Encourage them and present the gospel if needed — especially if they are not a believer.
11. Always finish with something like "I pray this helps, God bless," or "Kind regards."

Chapter 1

Teaching by Example

To start off, I want to do something different. I want to show you how I break down a hostile letter and look at it biblically. Hopefully, this will give you some pointers on how to respond to similar inquiries in the future, whether in person, email, or on forums, before we jump into the bulk of the responses.

One of the first things I do is pray for wisdom and discernment in responding. My prayer is that each response I make will honor and glorify God. Then I read the letter and try to discern what the person believes.

When I read R.B.'s email (see below), I saw that he is very hostile toward the Bible, appearing to be a non-Christian. He is likely an atheist (or unaware of being one variant of atheist called a "humanist," who, perhaps inadvertently, sees humans as the ultimate authority — for instance, on a subject like morality as opposed to God being the authority). He has obviously encountered Christians who were not well versed in apologetics — or he is basing his claims on common caricatures of creationists from skeptics.

This gives us a head start on how to handle the response: use the Word of God but also show *why* we use it. We may also have to use some philosophy to show that the view the inquirer is using is not well grounded. Remember that each hostile email is an opportunity to share the truth. Here is R.B.'s letter, exactly as it arrived:

> **i would just like to comment that the only proof of creationism is the bible. the bible was written by men. men can lie. man is capable of the most horribly attrocities on the planet. you ask us not to believe in the word of God, but the word of men who claim that they are speaking for God. most people pick ad choose what they want to believe in the bible. if you believe one part of the bible, you have to believe every single word. you can't take parts word-for-word, and change the rest of it through your own interpritation. all i hear is that science is all wrong because it disputes the bible, but the bible itself is the only evidence of any creationist claims. dinosaur bones were burried by the devil to test our faith. you can just discredit any scientific evidence by saying "it doesn't say that in the bible." it doesn't say anything**

about chemistry in the bible. does that mean that all chemists are wrong because their explanation is not in the bible?

R.B.

Thanks for the inquiry. I am responding below with both sincerity and respect. [Note: I like to start many letters like this to show the author that I am not trying to be harsh by any means. It is difficult to read the tone of a letter or email, so be up front and say (and mean!) that it is written with kindness. Even though someone may send a hostile email, we should not treat him or her as an enemy. The false philosophy and false principalities are the enemy (Ephesians 6:12). We need to keep in mind that all Christians were once enemies of God who were saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:8). God first loved us, setting the example for us to pass along love and respect for others created in His image (1 John 4:9; John 15:17). In fact, we are commanded to use gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15)]; this response will also be done in a point-by-point style.

i would just like to comment that the only proof of creationism is the bible. the bible was written by men.

Of course, the Bible was written by men, but his claim here is that God was NOT involved. He has no way of substantiating the validity of his claim (no God involved in the production of the Bible) except by blind faith, which is arbitrary. For someone to truly make this statement, he would have to be transcendent and omnipresent. He would have to be able to "see" into the spiritual realm and verify that God did not influence the writers of the Bible many years ago. Such attributes that this person is inadvertently claiming are attributes of God. So, in essence, R.B. is claiming to be God, or just repeating what he has heard from others, who claim to know more than God.

This is a worldview issue right from the start. One can believe R.B., or any human, is "god" (i.e., humans seen as the ultimate authority), or one can place his faith in the true Creator God and His eyewitness account in His Word, seeing Him as authoritative. One can respond by pointing out that he is claiming to be God with this statement.

men can lie.

This is true, but not because R.B. is saying it. It is true because God says it (Romans 3:4). And R.B. apparently believes that lying is morally wrong. In a response, one can point out that for R.B. to say this he is borrowing morality from the Bible by at least admitting to the concept of moral truth.

But interestingly, one could ask R.B., "Were you lying when you claimed the Bible was written merely by men?" What this shows is that, logically, by the writer's own standards, he could be lying. Of course, this should be done with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

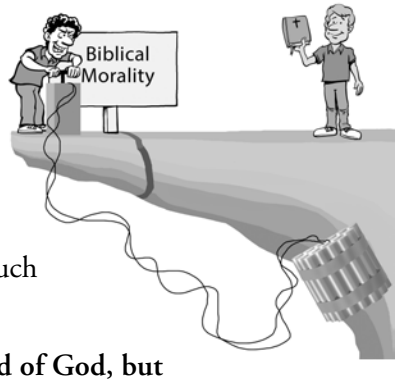
man is capable of the most horribly attrocities on the planet.

Again, this is true, but not because R.B. said it. In fact, I am glad that he recognizes this, because it gives us two ways to respond.

1. Originally, God made the world perfect, and there were no atrocities. But because of man's sin, the world is now subject to such things. It serves as a reminder that we need a Savior from sin and this sin-cursed world.[1]

2. Many people often try to blame God for such atrocities, yet the reader rightly recognizes that man is involved. Man's sin, again, is why such things exist.

Both of these answers lead into the gospel message.[2]



Another thing that is useful is to show that R.B. is borrowing Christian morality to argue against it. Consider the accompanying illustration. He is borrowing from the Bible's morality to say such things are wrong.

you ask us not to believe in the word of God, but the word of men who claim that they are speaking for God.

Note the fallacy here. He is assuming that his statement above (that leads to a human claiming to be God because he has elevated his own thoughts to be greater than God's Word) is true; hence, he is building on it. We need to point out the fallacy and then show what this philosophy leads to (the "don't answer, answer" strategy from Proverbs 26:4–5). One could say:

I don't accept your proposition that God had nothing to do with His Word, but let's assume for a moment that you are correct.

1. For more on this, please see "Why Does God's Creation Include Death and Suffering?" http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab/why-does-creation-include-suffering.

2. For more on this please see: "The Gospel of Jesus Christ," http://www.answersingenesis.org/about/good-news.

> How do you propose to save yourself from sin and death if salvation has not come through Jesus Christ?
>
> Also, why would you be upset with horrible atrocities and lies? By saying lies and horrible atrocities are wrong, you are borrowing from a biblical worldview. In a worldview that does not acknowledge the God of the Bible, why are such things wrong? Such things would be governed by chemical reactions in the brain. Why would anyone be upset about titanium reacting with boron?

> **most people pick ad choose what they want to believe in the bible.**

Sadly, this is true, and it reveals how much humanism has influenced Christians. In essence, what happens is that people (even Christians) use their own ideas to pick and choose what they want to believe from the Bible.

So, Christians, take note of what the real authority is in this situation: a person's own ideas, not God's Word. The real authority to those who "pick and choose" is a human, not God, i.e., humanism. Sadly, many Christians in today's culture are mixing Christianity with humanism (recall Exodus 20:3). As Christians, we should always use God's Word as the authority, not our own sinful, fallible reasoning.

In response to R.B., one could point out that R.B. is doing the same thing. He is opting to believe that lying and horrible atrocities are wrong. He is picking and choosing these things from the Bible to believe, whether he realizes it or not, yet rejecting the rest — including its authority statements.

> **if you believe one part of the bible, you have to believe every single word.**

If R.B. really believed this, then why doesn't he believe the whole Bible, since he already borrowed from its morality and concept of truth?

> **you can't take parts word-for-word, and change the rest of it through your own interpritation.**

Take note of R.B.'s assumption here. He assumes that the entire Bible is written in the same literary style. A remedial look at the Bile reveals poetry, metaphors, literal history, prayers, genealogical data, etc. He gives a false assumption and tries to build on it, so his entire argument breaks down.

The issue is letting God interpret His own Word (Scripture interprets Scripture). This is why understanding the context and the complementary nature of Scripture is so important. It has nothing to do with human

interpretation. Many, like R.B., may be assuming "no God," and therefore that God cannot interpret, so people must. But this is not the case.

Proverbs 8:8–9 and 2 Corinthians 4:2 reveal that the Scriptures are to be taken plainly or straightforwardly. I like to put this in simple terms: metaphors are metaphors; poetry is poetry; literal history is literal history; and so on. So there should be no reason for outlandish interpretations, unless one does it in one's own mind (e.g., mixing it with humanism).

all i hear is that science is all wrong because it disputes the bible,

I wanted to cut this phrase off here and explain two things. First, science is not all wrong. It is a methodology that actually confirms the Bible. And second, R.B. is confusing the term "science" with secular interpretations of science and evolution.

but the bible itself is the only evidence of any creationist claims.

In reality, the Bible is the foundation for creationists' claims. But all facts can be used by creationists as evidence. For example, dinosaurs are often taught as evidence for evolution and millions of years, but they are used by creationists to teach that God created them on day 6 and that the bulk of the dinosaurs died in the Flood of Noah's day, leaving their fossils behind (that is, those that were not on the ark).[3]

dinosaur bones were burried by the devil to test our faith.

If this is intended as a caricature of our position (or a general creationist position), it's just a plain straw man argument. As just stated, dinosaurs existed and their bones were buried in the Flood. Interesting that for someone who is arguing against the Bible, R.B. seems to adhere to biblical teaching that the devil exists!

you can just discredit any scientific evidence by saying "it doesn't say that in the bible."

Again, take note that R.B. is equating interpretations with "scientific evidence." We do not dispute dinosaur bones, we dispute the dates given for them, and we have reasonable doubt for those dates.[4] Scientific models and interpretations offer great support for the Bible. However, at Answers in Genesis we like to point out that scientific models can change with new

3. Ken Ham, gen. ed., *The New Answers Book 1* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006), p. 149–177, http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab/what-happened-to-the-dinosaurs.

4. Ibid., p. 77–86, 113–124.

information, but the Bible is still the inerrant framework within which to interpret scientific facts.

it doesn't say anything about chemistry in the bible.

When there is an absolute (i.e., "doesn't say anything") in a statement, it is good to re-read it and see if that absolute is true. As a side note, in an atheistic worldview, in which absolutes do not exist, it is interesting that absolutes are used quite often!

Regardless, the Bible does touch on chemistry, but the Bible isn't a chemistry textbook. Consider passages about iron, bronze, and copper. To purify such items and mix alloys requires some chemistry. In fact, materials processing requires considerable amounts of chemistry. Naturally, there are some subjects not mentioned in Scripture, but that is not a problem. For example, the Bible doesn't say that using a club (or gun, or rope, etc.) to kill someone is wrong; it says murder is wrong. The framework is in place.

does that mean that all chemists are wrong because their explanation is not in the bible?

Note another absolute (all) that tries to set up that creationists think all chemists are wrong. Of course, there are creationists who are chemists, and because of God's attributes that we know from the Bible (logical, non-contradictory), we know that chemistry is possible. So it has little to do with this, even though R.B. claims that it does.

Now that we have answered the inquirer, it is good to sum up with the gospel — whether in a few lines or even more in-depth. It is always good to close with some encouraging words about what to do next and even an invitation to learn more about Jesus Christ and the Bible. Remember the Great Commission at the end of Matthew. We want to see people saved. Perhaps you could say something like this:

> I can see that you have a strong moral conscience (lying is wrong, atrocities by man are horrible, etc.), and this is good, since it comes from the Bible. R.B., I hope that this response has challenged you to consider the truth of the Bible, which seems to be your biggest stumbling block. I want to encourage you to study this further and consider the claims of Christ.

Then perhaps include a link to an article or chapter that explains the gospel to make it a little easier for him and close with the words "With kindness in Christ."