

CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE?

WORD IN THE WORLD SERIES



Pradeep Dias

<http://www.letsthinkthrough.com>

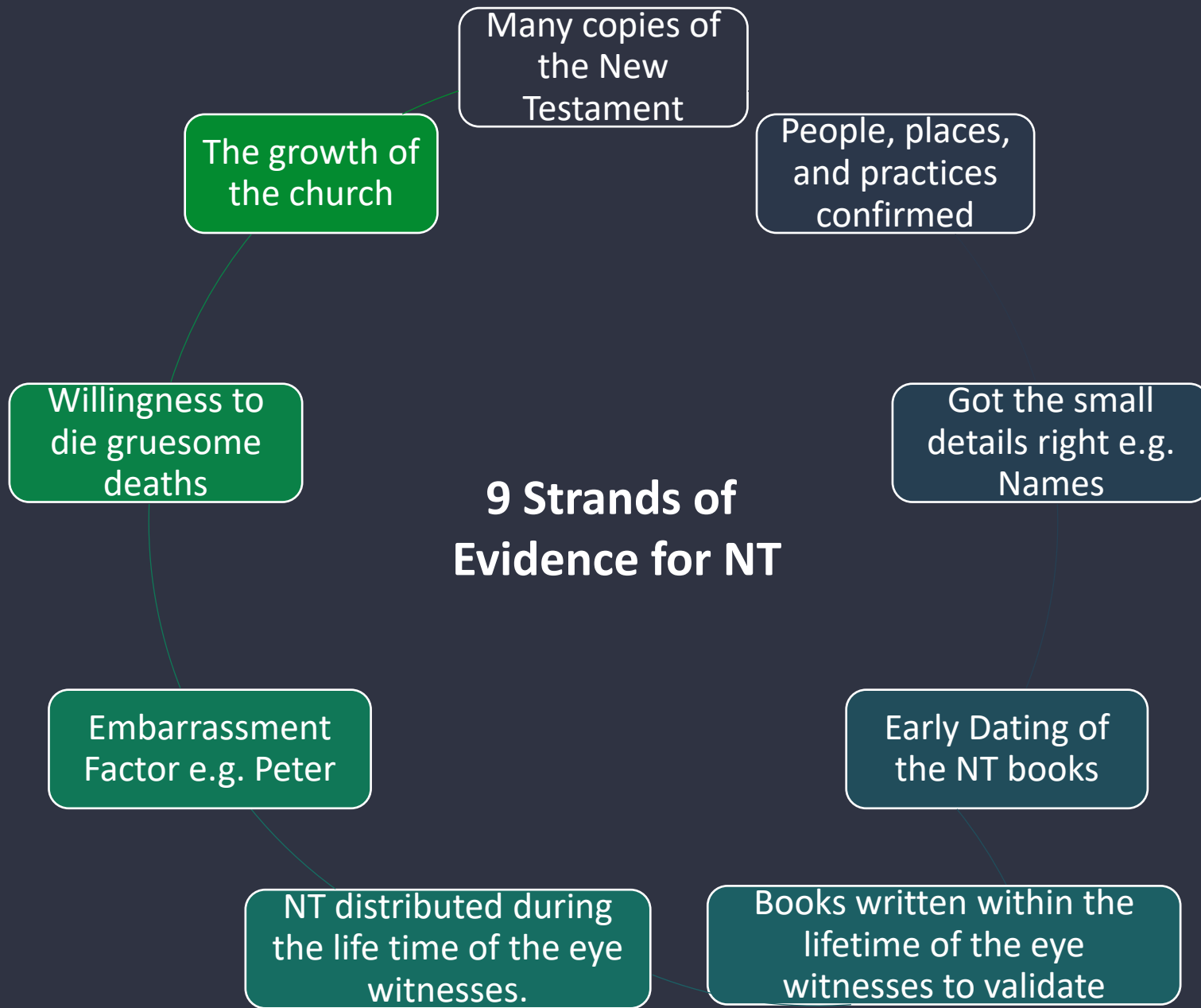
An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The image is in black and white, except for a large green graphic element on the left side that transitions into a grey rectangular box in the center. The text 'RECAP WEEK 5' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters inside the grey box.

RECAP WEEK 5

RECAPPING WEEK 5 – IS THE OLD TESTAMENT AUTHENTIC?

- The NT was written by the apostles and those who walked with the apostles.
- The early dating of the NT meant the eye witnesses were around to validate the content
- The cannon was formed early (organically not institutionally) well before the Council of Hippo (397 AD)
- There were many gospels excluded because they were late productions (not by apostles, forgeries or was not in line with OT / NT theology)
- Like the OT, the NT has a lot of archaeological, geographical evidence
- We learnt the new testament writers got the details right and did not compromise on the little details.

9 Strands of Evidence for NT



CONFIDENCE BOOSTER

God

God in His Nature is Truth and cannot lie

God through His Holy Spirit inspired the human authors

The witness of the Holy Spirit

The Bible

> 25000 Manuscript & Fragments. Very early dating.

Accuracy of transmission with no impactful scribe errors

The amazing internal consistency and harmony

Written by 40 authors over 1600 years

Biblical Prophecy

Others knowledge

Findings in science, archaeology and history

Change

Inspire movements

Transform societies

Changes lives

WEEK 6

Questions Series



IS THE BIBLE FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS?

IS THE BIBLE FULL OF CONTRADICTION

Defining the terms

A contradiction is where a statement cannot be true and false at the same time in the same sense.

For example, I can't be a 172cm tall and 142cm tall while standing straight barefoot.

IS THE BIBLE FULL OF CONTRADICTION

Many of the times what we see in the Bible is apparent contradictions.

- In most cases reading the passage in context gives you the clarity.
- Some times, it is a matter of getting a bible dictionary, concordance or commentary to shed light. What does the word in Hebrew / Greek mean?

IS THE BIBLE FULL OF CONTRADICTION

There are difficult passages, but there are also reasonable explanations

- So it is important that when we approach the Bible, to have the attitude of “innocent till proven guilty”.
- Sadly many critics start from “guilty till proven innocent”

SOME COMMON MISTAKES WHEN READING

Pitfalls to avoid

- **Without being exhaustive**
 - E.g. the details of the childhood of Jesus
 - E.g. the silent years of Paul after his conversion
- **When there is no external evidence to back a biblical claim**
 - E.g. Jericho was not destroyed
- **When it uses ordinary language to describe complex process**
 - Setting of the sun or the falling of rain
 - This does not mean the sun rotates around the Earth

SOME COMMON MISTAKES WHEN READING

Pitfalls to avoid

- **When it is not precise with the numbers**
 - During OT time, decimal point precision was not required
 - 1 Kings 7:23-26. E.g. Pi = 3 not 3.1415926535897
- **When using loose quotations “ ... ”**
 - Zach 12:10 (God speaking), John 19:37 – John writing.
- **Copyist errors**
 - 2 Chron 22:2 (KJV – Ahaziah 42 years), 2 Kings 8:6 (22 years)

SOME COMMON MISTAKES WHEN READING

Pitfalls to avoid

- **Assuming the Unexplained Is Unexplainable**
 - E.g. Historians believed Moses didn't write the Pentateuch because literacy came after Moses' time.
- **Partial reports are False reports**
 - E.g. Peter's confession of Christ. Matt 16:16, Mk 8:29, Lk 9:20. Ex. 20:8-11 with Deut. 5:12-15 (10 commandments)
- **Same event different accounts**
 - Matt 28:5, one angel at tomb. Jn 20:12 – two angels
 - Temptations of Jesus (Matt / Luke reverse order of temptation 2 and 3, Mark gives a short account)

SOME COMMON MISTAKES WHEN READING

Pitfalls to avoid

- **Getting the sequence right**
 - Matthew says scarlet robe placed on Jesus (Matthew 27:28)
 - John says purple robe placed on Jesus (John 19:2)
 - Understanding the sequence of events and context helps with the explanation
- **Presuming the Bible approves all records**
 - 2 Sam 11:4 – David's sin
- **When the Bible uses metaphors, hyperboles**
 - I am the door, pluck out your eye

IS THE BIBLE RELEVANT IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

HOLY
BIBLE
?



IS THE BIBLE RELEVANT TODAY?

The underlying assumptions in this question are

- The Bible was written very long time ago
- It was written to tribal, nomadic, ancient bronze / iron age people
- They were not educated or technologically advanced like us in the 21st century
- Given how different the our world is and their world was, the Bible is not relevant

IS THE BIBLE RELEVANT TODAY?

Another underlying assumption is

- The questions we grapple with are different from the questions people 2000-4000 years ago grappled with.
- Therefore the answers are also dated
- Therefore the Bible is irrelevant.

IS THE BIBLE RELEVANT TODAY?

What are some of the questions that pre-occupy 21st century man?

- Artificial Intelligence (what is the implication to humanity from AI)
- Challenges from urbanization, globalization?
- The science of gene editing and designer humans, creation Human 2.0
- Evolution of human sexuality and gender issues
- Challenges from new theories of race, identity / tribal political thought
- Digitization and the impacts on democracy and society
- How free will societies be in the phase of secularization, government control
- What is the future of economics (centralized or decentralized)
- Will capitalism remain or evolve in the coming years

IS THE BIBLE RELEVANT TODAY?

On the face of these types of questions we as Christians can ..

- Feel defeated
- Develop the belief of “privatizing” our faith
- Abandoning our faith
- Ignoring the challenges altogether

IS THE BIBLE RELEVANT TODAY?

I do want to propose an alternative

- It is called **integration**.
- Francis Schaeffer, once famously said
“All truth is God’s truth”.
- There is nothing for us to be afraid of even when we don’t have answers or we go digging for answers to answer some of these challenges.

“I BELIEVE IN CHRISTIANITY AS I BELIEVE
THAT THE SUN HAS RISEN: NOT ONLY
BECAUSE I SEE IT, BUT BECAUSE BY IT I
SEE EVERYTHING ELSE.”

— C.S. LEWIS

IS THE BIBLE RELEVANT TODAY?

- Our understanding of God (theology) has to inform our life in the world.
- As C S Lewis points out, we have to see everything through the eyes of Scripture.
- Remember ultimately all these challenges are
 1. Raised by humans
 2. About humans
 3. The world that is inhabited by humans (digital and physical).
- Every human has a worldview (the lenses through which we look at and interpret everything about life).

EVERYONE HAS A WORLDVIEW

God

What is beyond death?

Origin of the universe

What is the solution?

Origin of Man

What is wrong?

Why am I here?



IS THE BIBLE RELEVANT TODAY?

- These worldviews in turn influence how we look at world, it's challenges and the solutions.
- As Christians we can be confident, the Christian worldview is grounded in Truth because
 - It is logically consistent (there are no contradictions in what is being asserted)
 - There is a evidence for the truth statements made
 - The answers when applied to real life, it is relevant
- So we as Christians, in obedience to Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 10:5, we have to replace our wrong beliefs, thinking and assumptions with the truth that is found in the Scriptures.

THE GREAT CHRISTIAN REVOLUTIONS CAME NOT BY
THE DISCOVERY OF SOMETHING THAT WAS NOT
KNOWN BEFORE. THEY HAPPEN WHEN SOMEONE
TAKES RADICALLY SOMETHING THAT WAS ALWAYS
THERE (COMMUNICATED IN SCRIPTURE)

- RICHARD NIEBUHR
(AUTHOR OF CHRIST AND CULTURE)



ISN'T THE BIBLE ANTI- SCIENCE?

Pradeep Dias

<http://www.letsthinkthrough.com>

ISN'T THE BIBLE ANTI-SCIENCE?

Critics of the Bible have introduced a false dichotomy between Faith and Science.

ISN'T THE BIBLE ANTI-SCIENCE?

1. Worldviews

- Most critics of the Bible are agnostic or atheistic.
- They believe all that is visible and invisible in this universe is purely natural.
- In a naturalistic universe, the only explanations available are materialistic
- And the only way to true knowledge and objective facts is through science.
- This worldview is called scientism

ISN'T THE BIBLE ANTI-SCIENCE?

The fool sets in his heart,
“There is no God”...

Psalm 14:1

Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs . . . in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.

Dr Richard Lewontin - Harvard University, Genetics Professor

ISN'T THE BIBLE ANTI-SCIENCE?

2. Miracles

- The implication of this view is that all supernatural records are false.
- David Hume's objections to miracles is still prevalent today

Objection

- **Can't depend on eye witness testimony not educated. Miracle has to be reproduced to give a naturalistic explanation**

Response

- A person does not have to be highly educated to be a good witness. Honesty is not based on education.
- Moses, Daniel, Luke, Paul were highly educated for their time and they believed in the miraculous
- Miracles are not natural, they are supernatural
- If there is a God, there can always be miracles.
- Based on Hume's criteria for eye witnesses, all of history will have to be rejected

ISN'T THE BIBLE ANTI-SCIENCE?

Objection

- **Miracles don't happen today therefore miracles didn't happen then**

Response

- Hume can't himself prove no miracles happen today. This is his opinion, not a fact.
- Surely, Hume didn't deny the existence of dinosaurs because they don't exist today!
- Miracles are unique. They are special events
- Just because miracles happen infrequently doesn't mean it doesn't happen at all.
- How about lottery winners, they have 1 in 13,983,816 probability of winning (6 numbers)
- If there is a God, there can always be miracles.

ISN'T THE BIBLE ANTI-SCIENCE?

Objection

- Testimonies of miracles in one religion should cancel out the other religion

Response

- How is this even an objection.
- Every miraculous event has to be checked on its own merits.
- Jesus' resurrection was testified and believed by the entire Christian community in real time.
- The song in 1 Corinthians 15 that Paul uses is now dated to within 2-5 years after the death of Christ.
- Other miracles in other religions is possible
- But their attestation with eye witness testimonies is dated to much later (100s of years later)
- Furthermore there is no other religion that claims resurrection miracle. It stands 100% unique.



THE UNIVERSE

THE UNIVERSE WAS CREATED

- What does the Bible affirm?
 - There was a beginning! At a finite point in the past there was **NO** universe.
 - The Bible affirms the universe was created Ex Nihilo (out of nothing)
- What does science and philosophy affirm
 - **Philosophical**
 - Everything that exists has a cause (something can't come out of nothing).
 - **Scientific Evidence**
 - 2nd Law of Thermodynamics (Universe is losing heat)
 - Universe expands (moving from a core outwards)
 - Science terms the start of the cosmos is the Big Bang

“THE BEST DATA WE HAVE ARE PRECISELY WHAT I WOULD HAVE PREDICTED HAD I NOTHING TO GO TO OTHER THAN FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES, THE PSALMS AND THE BIBLE AS A WHOLE”

ARNO PENZIAS (NOBEL LAUREATE FOR PHYSICS)

A night sky photograph featuring the Milky Way galaxy. The galaxy's bright, yellowish-white core is visible in the center, with a dense field of stars extending across the sky. The foreground is dominated by dark, silhouetted tree branches, creating a natural frame for the celestial scene. The overall tone is dark and serene, with the light from the stars providing the primary illumination.

**MAGNIFICENT “FINELY
TUNED” UNIVERSE**

UNIVERSE TUNED FOR LIFE

- Modern physics have identified 30 cosmological constants (so far)
- Each of the constants have to be precise (to the billionth)
- Not only individually but across all the constants and with each other
- Any change to even 1 constant or quantity by billionth of a fraction and life will not be possible.
- The rate of expansion of the universe, strength of gravity, charge of an atom, charge of neutron to a proton, etc.
- Critics claim there is an appearance. But there is never order and surgical precision from chaos

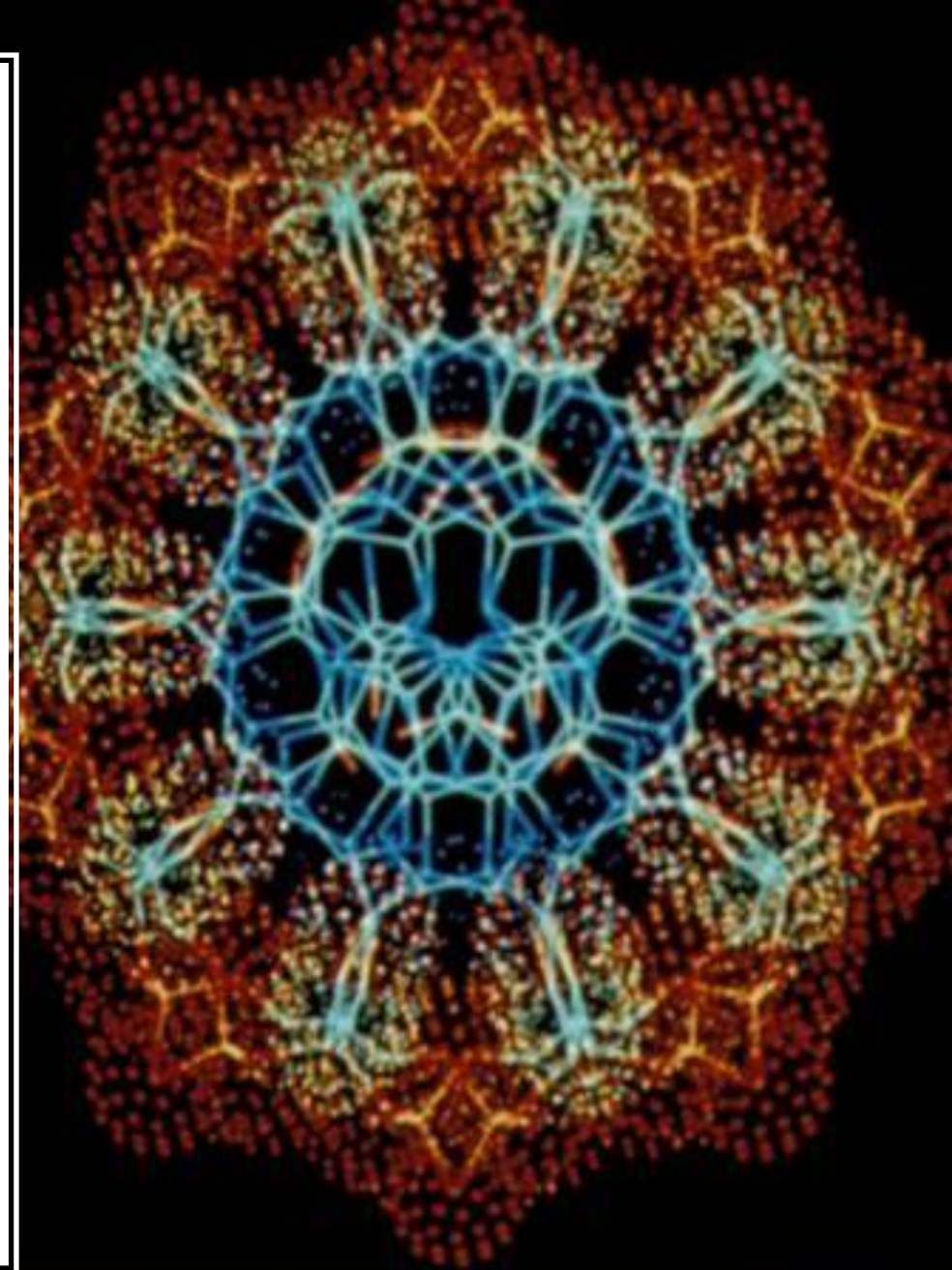


“A SINGLE PARAMETER, THE SO-CALLED “ORIGINAL PHASE-SPACE VOLUME”, REQUIRED SUCH PRECISE FINE TUNING THAT THE “CREATOR’S AIM MUST HAVE BEEN [PRECISE] TO AN ACCURACY OF ONE PART IN 10^{10123} ” (TEN BILLION MULTIPLIED BY ITSELF 123 TIMES)

**ROGER PENROSE
MATHEMATICIAN OXFORD UNIVERSITY**

FINE TUNING IN US - DNA

- Every DNA has 8000 books of information
- Linking all your DNA one after another, the chain will extend from Earth to the Sun and back! 600 times !
- This is not jumbled characters. It is code information like a computer programmer writing software code, all perfectly working in harmony directing every bit of operation in the human body.



An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The image is dark and has a halftone or dithered texture. A large, semi-transparent green rectangle is positioned on the left side, and a white-outlined grey rectangle is centered on the right. The text 'Q&A' is written in white inside the grey rectangle.

Q&A

HOW DID LIFE ORIGINATE?

Darwinian
Evolution

Random Mutation

Natural Selection

Millions of Years

Common Ancestry

Creation

Intentional

God Driven

Short or Long
periods of time

Common Ancestry

Challenges to Darwinian Evolution

- Evidence for macro evolution not available in fossil records.
 - Micro evolution is not contradictory to Christianity
- Early conditions on Earth too harsh for basic building blocks for life to be formed i.e. amino acids
- Non-life (amino acids) cannot give life
- Mutation (defect) does not lead to progress but regress. Underlying assumption is learning from mistake and adjusting but this assumes intelligence and directedness. Natural Selection is an impersonal, non-intelligent process.
- Knowledge has to precede design (complexity of a single cell)
- Discovery of the human genetic code - DNA

INTERPRETATIONS OF GENESIS 1 AND 2

Literal Days

Day Age (spans of time)

Framework (metaphorical)

Analogical (God's work days)

- Historical most Jews or early Christians did not look at the Genesis days as literal days.
- God does not tell us “how” He created life.
- What the Bible affirms is God is the creator of all. The forces of nature are not gods (Frozen 2)
- In the absence of God Evolution according to Darwin is the only explanation.

ISN'T THE EARTH MILLIONS YEARS OLD?

- One of the points of contention between science and Christianity is around the “age of the Earth”.
- The Bible seems to indicate an Earth the Earth is about 6000-10000 years.
- Science seems to affirm millions of years



Day 1
God called
Light Day

Day 2



Day 3



Day 4



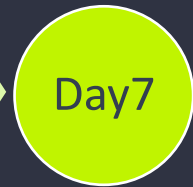
Day 5



Day 6



Day 7



Production of
vegetation of all
kinds takes more
than a day

Adam naming of
animals is more
than a day

God's DAY of rest
is not 24 hours. It
still continues
today