

“Help! My Doubts Scare Me!”

Dear Sue Bohlin,

Hello. My name is _____. I e-mailed Ray earlier too. Anyways, I was reading an e-mail discussion you had with somebody, who didn't believe in God. You said something in it about how it's not an intellect issue, but a heart issue. This is hard for me to accept. I'm ashamed admitting this, but oh gosh its hard for me to admit. Maybe I won't. I could say that I don't believe in God, but that just sounds way too harsh. Have you heard of anybody who was a Christian, but then they began to have doubts and became agnostic? That's how I feel. I asked Jesus into my heart when I was younger (I'm 18 now), but for a long time I've just been so skeptical. I guess I'm not a Christian, because a Christian knows that he or she is one, and I don't. I don't know how to express what I've been going through lately. Everyday I think about my doubt and it depresses me. I'm not sure if I'll ever get rid of it and that scares me. I desire to believe in God so much, but it's hard. I have so many questions. I wonder why God doesn't show himself to me so I know for sure that He is there. I don't know. Maybe He has but it's just not enough. Maybe I don't have enough faith.

Another thing that really doesn't help me is some of the stuff that I have read on the internet. Different books that I've read about have caused me to have even more doubt. Have you heard of *The Bible Unearthed...*, or *The Jesus Puzzle...*? I haven't read any of them, but read reviews. Anyways, the second one I think denies that Jesus was a historical person. That really bothers me. Earlier today I was reading something on the web where this person was being critical of Lee Strobel (who wrote *The Case for Christ*). I really like that book (not done with it yet), but after what I read on the internet about it, I wonder if it really shows that Jesus was a historical person. I don't know. Maybe I just let other people's conflicting

views on Christianity get to me too much, but after reading these things, I start to wonder if maybe they are correct on what they are arguing.

Anyways, to me, my problem doesn't seem to be a heart issue because I really would like to believe in God. I desire to believe in Him and live for Him, but it's hard. Is there something that I lack? Do I just not have enough faith? I don't know, maybe I don't. Well I think I've made this long enough. If there's any advice you could give me I would appreciate it. Maybe you could pray for me. Thanks a lot.

I know you don't know me, but I REALLY wish I could reach through this computer screen and put my arms around you and give you a big hug and tell you IT'S GOING TO BE OK!!!!!! It is so OK to have doubts, to wonder about where you stand spiritually, because, at 18, you are at the point you need to be—deciding for yourself what you should keep and what you should jettison of what you have been taught. You are an adult now but you probably don't feel that you have enough information to make an informed, committed adult choice about something as important as eternal destiny and one's relationship with God!

Good news—lots of other people are also in your shoes. But they don't ask for help, and bless you, you did, and there IS help for you!! There are good answers, and you'll be stronger and more confident for having voiced your doubts and questions, once you're on the other side of this spiritual crisis. It's OK, _____. . . .God is walking through it with you.

I guess I'm not a Christian, because a Christian knows that he or she is one, and I don't.

Well, no, actually that's not true. Many Christians have assurance that we are Christians, and many Christians fervently *hope* they are but they're not sure. That's an

important issue all by itself: can we *know* we're saved and going to heaven? Can we lose our salvation? Our founder and first president, Jimmy Williams, addressed this issue in one of [his e-mails](#).

I don't know how to express what I've been going through lately. Everyday I think about my doubt and it depresses me. I'm not sure if I'll ever get rid of it and that scares me.

I wish you could see God's heart as He watches you wrestle with your doubts and fears. He loves you so much (man, I feel like Monica on *Touched by an Angel* here!) and is very tender toward you as you experience these strong and scary emotions. I understand your fear that you'll never get rid of the doubt. But doubt is like darkness—you don't overcome it by pushing it away, you make it go away by bringing in light. As you seek light and truth and to know what is really true and real, God will show you the light. I am so grateful that you came to us at Probe instead of some New Age "all religions are the same" website!

I desire to believe in God so much, but it's hard. I have so many questions. I wonder why God doesn't show himself to me so I know for sure that He is there. I don't know. Maybe He has but it's just not enough. Maybe I don't have enough faith.

What's important isn't the amount or strength of our faith, but the *object* of our faith. God is strong enough to handle your doubts and to show you, in ways so intimate you will know it's HIM, that He is real and He loves you very much.

Another thing that really doesn't help me is some of the stuff that i have read on the internet. Different books that I've read about have caused me to have even more doubt. Have you heard of The Bible Unearthed..., or The Jesus Puzzle...? I haven't read any of them, but read reviews. Anyways, the second one I think denies that Jesus was a historical

person. That really bothers me.

With good reason. Some of the best Christian apologetics books started out with the author's intention to disprove Christianity, and the facts overwhelmed the skeptics into belief. The entire world was affected by the life of Jesus Christ, in one way or another, but He didn't exist? Now THAT takes a lot of faith!

Earlier today I was reading something on the web where this person was being critical of Lee Strobel (who wrote The Case for Christ). I really like that book (not done with it yet), but after what I read on the internet about it, I wonder if it really shows that Jesus was a historical person.

Did you know Lee Strobel started out as an atheist? I'm glad you're reading it; it was a wise choice. So is his second book, *The Case for Faith*. I found this statement from him in an interview online: "I have found that the testimony of history points compellingly toward Jesus Christ having returned from the dead in the ultimate authentication of His claim to be God. To me faith in Jesus is not blind or irrational. I have so much independent evidence that the New Testament writings are reliable that I would be swimming upstream against the evidence if I were to follow the teachings of the Koran or the Book of Mormon. The more I subject the New Testament to analysis, the more I pepper it with questions, the more I walk away utterly convinced of its trustworthiness."

I don't know. Maybe I just let other people's conflicting views on Christianity get to me too much, but after reading these things, I start to wonder if maybe they are correct on what they are arguing.

Just about every truth, especially those of eternal importance, will be countered with something counterfeit, because we're in a very real battle for our minds and souls.

It's unfortunate that the counter-arguments can *appear* so compelling, but the issue is ultimate truth. Right now, you're on the right track in seeking truth and desiring to sort through the clamoring voices that attack it.

Anyways, to me, my problem doesn't seem to be a heart issue because I really would like to believe in God. I desire to believe in Him and live for Him, but its hard. Is there something that I lack? Do I just not have enough faith? I don't know, maybe I don't.

It's been said that the Christian life isn't hard, it's IMPOSSIBLE. You can't live for God in your own strength—not for any length of time, anyway, without burning out and getting majorly discouraged. The secret is to allow Jesus to live His life through you by yielding to Him. That, by the way, is one of the things that sets Christianity apart from every other religion: God inside us, offering to live His life through us, without any loss of our own individuality. But right now, the big issue is what to do with your head/heart conflict. Fortunately, there is a PERFECT book that I believe will make all the difference in the world to you.

It's called [*Making Your Faith Your Own: A Guidebook for Believers With Questions*](#) by Teresa Vining. I was privileged to read Teresa's manuscript and LOVED her book. One of its strengths is that she was in the exact place you are now, and she takes you through the questions AND the answers, and suggests you keep a journal as you work through the book so you can decide what you believe and commit to, and what you're not willing to. It is a terrific book on apologetics, and she is very respectful of the person with questions and doubts. I think you will love this book too.

Well I think I've made this long enough. If there's any advice you could give me I would appreciate it. Maybe you could pray for me.

I'd like to pray for you right now!

Father, I lift up _____ to You and I thank You for her intellect and her honesty in facing her doubts and questions. Thank You that You are not in the least bit troubled by them because You know You are real and true and able to take her through this time to a point where she will know beyond a shadow of a doubt that YOU ARE. I ask You to send her little intimate glimpses of You and open her eyes so she'll know it's You saying "Hi." I ask that You give her a peace when she's pursuing truth and give her an uncomfortable restlessness when she's moving toward the darkness and deception that would seek to draw her away from You. Lord, I thank You for Your hand on _____'s life and on her heart and on her mind, and by faith I thank You for taking her to the place where she will joyfully serve You with all three. Lord, make her feel loved and protected and cherished by You.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Hope this helps, dear one!

Sue

“Are Pastors Bound to Marry Anyone Who Asks?”

As an ordained Baptist pastor, my question is this: Am I bound by the Bible to marry anyone who asks me to? If a couple comes to me to ask me to marry them, and they tell me they are not saved, but want to get married anyway, should I? If they are living together, am I supposed to marry them just the same? I

am confused by what other pastors have told me, and have read scripture, but I still need some advice outside that of my denomination.

Thank you for your letter. As far as I'm aware, you are not biblically bound to marry anyone who asks you to. There are probably other pastors in your immediate area who would be willing to marry such people. If you really feel uncomfortable about it, you could probably refer such people to these other pastors.

However, another Probe staff member made some really good points about this issue. This person's previous pastor, who had a genuine heart for God and for people, would usually marry unbelievers. His reasoning was as follows:

1. Once married, such people would no longer be living in sin.
2. When they had kids and looked for a church, they'd possibly come back to his.
3. It gave him a chance to share the gospel with them.

Also, if you require such couples to go through pre-marital counseling, it would give you extensive time with them to impart biblical principles about marriage and family.

Finally, marriage is a God-ordained institution for all people, not just believers. We want people to understand that God takes marriage very seriously and that He will hold them accountable for violating their marriage vows. We also want to be available to those who are struggling with marriage difficulties and contemplating divorce. Ultimately, however, people must bear a personal responsibility before God for what they do (or don't do) with their marriages.

Thus, I personally do not believe that it would be morally wrong for you to marry such people (generally speaking, at least. I suppose there might always be exceptions). However, if you don't feel comfortable before God, I would simply refer the people to another local pastor. You're not morally

obligated to marry them either.

Hope this helps a bit.

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn

Probe Ministries

“What is the Spiritual Gift of Discernment?”

I was reading some of Probe's responses to e-mails and came across a message which touched on discernment as a spiritual gift ([“Do You Know Why My Dreams Come True?”](#)). Over the years I have noticed that I often get what I classify as a “gut reaction” to people, particularly in Christian settings. I seem to detect, almost immediately, whether a person is sincere or a phony. Amazingly, I am almost always correct in my initial reaction, though it sometimes takes years before that reaction is confirmed. However, rather than attribute such feelings to the Holy Spirit, I have always seen them as a prideful or fleshly response to some subconscious cue I get from the other person's behavior. Could you elaborate on discernment as a spiritual gift? What exactly is it, how does it work and what is its purpose? And, most importantly, how can one determine whether they, in fact, have such a gift? Scripture references would be helpful.

I'm delighted to hear from you! I thank the Lord every time I hear a believer recognizes they have the gift of discernment because the body of Christ desperately needs this “early warning system.” Unfortunately, it's been my experience that

many people dismiss any spiritual gifts they can't understand or grasp naturalistically—in other words, that are so supernatural in origin and manifestation they can't be explained any other way. So we lose out BIG when they are not encouraged or exercised.

The gift of discernment (1 Cor. 12:10) is a supernatural ability to distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, between holiness and evil.

Just as counterfeit money experts can quickly distinguish phony money from the real thing, those with the gift of discernment can distinguish holy and unholy spirits and discern truth from lies. A person with this gift can spot a phony before others do. It's been my experience that they can also tell when someone is lying. When you ask them, "But how do you KNOW?" they just shrug and say, "I just know. I don't know how I know, it's just there in my spirit." Proof that it's the Holy Spirit's empowering is given when they are continuously validated in their assessment.

This is NOT the same thing as a "psychic ability." Deut. 18:10-14 sternly forbids any involvement with spiritism. Only believers in Jesus Christ have this supernatural ability from the Holy Spirit.

1 Tim. 4:1 says that in latter days, deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons will come, so the important role of the gift of discernment is to identify those spirits and doctrines.

A discerning spirit tests the spirits with this rule of scripture:

"By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God."
(1 John 4:2,3)

Leslie B. Flynn writes in his book *19 Gifts of the Spirit*,

“Any relegating of Jesus Christ to an inferior spot less than the incarnate Son of God, the crucified and resurrected Savior, means that spirit is not of God.”

This is helpful to know when we are analyzing and evaluating things we hear and see in the spiritual domain (for example, when watching Oprah’s New Age friends on her show). But just as important, though, is the exercise of this gift in our everyday lives. Those who have the gift of discernment have told me it’s like an internal alarm bell going off. Some examples:

- Our church used to be located on a busy street where panhandlers often came by with a sob story about needing cash for their babies in the hospital or some other pretense. One of the people who worked in the office had the gift of discernment and, after spending just a couple of moments talking to these people, she could tell which ones really needed help and which ones were looking for money for booze. (If they were truly in need, there really would be a baby in the hospital, for example.)
- A friend took her 4-year-old son to see an art exhibit adjacent to art museum in Corpus Christi, Texas. The moment they entered the exhibits tent, her son stopped dead in his tracks. “Mommy, we can’t go in there. This place is bad.” Teri sensed the exact same presence of evil. They never saw a single piece of art before turning around and leaving. It turned out to be sponsored by a cult. Both mother and son later realized they have the gift of discernment.
- My husband Ray met a popular evangelical preacher at a dinner, but had a profoundly uncomfortable reaction to the man. (The word “slimeball” kept coming to mind.) There was no apparent reason, but it was a gut response. To be honest, this was before I realized he had the gift of discernment, and I dismissed his reaction as a critical spirit. The man was later removed from his pulpit for his unrepentant adulterous

lifestyle.

We have found these questions helpful in determining if one has this gift:

- Do you have an internal alarm that goes off when you encounter something phony or evil?
- Even when you're the only one who senses something wrong, is your "intuition" eventually validated?
- Do you (and others) consider yourself a good judge of character?

I hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

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“Did Jesus’ Travels to the Far East Impact His Adult Teachings?”

Some people are teaching that Jesus traveled to the Far East and adopted some of what he “learned” into his adult ministry. What he “adopted,” of course, was nothing more than New Age concepts in sheep’s clothing. I need some hard facts and good discussion to answer this teaching.

This teaching has been around for quite a while but no scholar really takes this too seriously. The teachings of Jesus and the Eastern religions are contradictory and not compatible. The eastern pantheistic view of God as merely an impersonal energy or force is very different from what Jesus taught us

about God as our Abba, personal creator and Father of His children. The doctrine of salvation is very different between the eastern religions and what Jesus taught. On teachings about eternity, Jesus does not teach anything about reincarnation. So on the very basic fundamentals, Jesus' teachings are incompatible with Eastern theology. Therefore it is highly unlikely he went and studied under Hindu monks in the east during his teen years.

Pat Zukeran
Probe Ministries

“Where DID Cain Get His Wife?”

“Where DID Cain Get His Wife?”

That's a long standing question that unfortunately, most commentaries don't offer much help answering. I assume a literal Adam and Eve as the first humans. Therefore for several generations the family tree has only one trunk. Seth and Cain could only have married daughters of Adam and Eve, their sisters.

That always causes some severe consternation. Francis Collins, an evangelical Christian and the new head of NIH, has written that that solution goes against numerous Old Testament laws. How could the God of the Bible allow for such things? Collins opts for an evolved human race and a figurative Adam and Eve. He also seems to think, though he doesn't explain, that Cain marrying his sister goes against the plain reading of the text.

The main societal taboo against incest is a practical one since offspring from these unions, even among distant cousins, carry an increased risk of birth defects. This is a well-known result of what geneticists call inbreeding. BUT Adam and Eve were completely without genetic mutation, the source of inbreeding birth defects. Therefore there was no biological risk from sister/brother marriages.

In the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it was still the practice of marrying within one's family, at least twenty generations after Adam and Eve if you assume no extra generations in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11.

In Genesis 20:12 Abraham tells Abimelech that he was not completely lying when he told Abimelech that Sarah was his sister; "Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother." Sarah was Abraham's half-sister.

When Isaac needed a wife, Abraham tells his servant to go to his country and even his own family to find a suitable wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:4). Genesis 24:15 tells us that Rebekah was the daughter of Bethuel, who is the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother.

Isaac then tells Jacob to seek a wife from the daughters of Laban, Rebekah's brother. (Genesis 28:2). So Jacob married two of his first cousins, Leah and Rachel.

Before the Law of Moses, these kinds of unions were the norm. But over 400 years later, mutations have accumulated in all populations and such marriages are quite risky. Therefore, I think, that is why you read in Leviticus 20:17 that if you marry your sister who is either the daughter of your father or the daughter of your mother (thus including half-siblings) they shall be cut off. So a marriage like Abraham and Sarah's was specifically outlawed in the Law of Moses. I think times have changed and the offspring of these once-normal

arrangements are at significant risk.

Also, there still may have been a reticence to marry a brother or sister with whom one grows up. But when you realize that Seth was born when Adam was 130 years old, certainly there were many more children between Cain and Abel, and Seth. Therefore Cain very conceivably could have married a sister who was twenty or thirty years younger than he was, and therefore they did not grow up together, so there wasn't the same degree of familiarity as with a same-age sibling.

Bottom-line, I find no difficulty either theologically or biologically with Cain and Seth marrying their sisters. Marrying within the family remained the normal practice for over twenty generations.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Help! I Opened Myself Up to the Devil!”

I am in need of help! When I was about fifteen years old, I was friends with a man who at that time I did not know was a Satan worshipper. He cut the palm of his hand, I cannot remember if he cut mine or not but, he then rubbed our palms together and he licked the blood from his hand. I really didn't think much of it at that time. Now, I am thirty-seven years old. For the past three years I have been having a lot of trouble with people following me, putting devil symbols in my house and just a lot of different things pertaining to the

devil.

I recently remembered this blood act with this man and now recall who he is. I recently found out that his daughter works with me and I really believe she knows what's going on. Although she acts totally innocent. I need to know if there is anything I can do to stop all this evilness around me. If you have any suggestions, please let me know.

Wow. You really do have a stronghold in your life for the evil one to exploit, don't you?

There is a powerful and wonderful resource that has freed thousands of people from exactly this kind of stronghold. Neil Anderson's book *The Bondage Breaker* is excellent, and you should read the whole book, but especially Chapter 12, called "Steps to Freedom in Christ." It is a series of prayers that walk you through all the places where you allowed Satan to gain a foothold in your life, and it helps you renounce them and stop the demonic harrassment.

I hope this helps. I know it has helped SO many people in your shoes.

Let me pray for you before I send this.

Father God, I lift up _____ to you and ask that You bring complete freedom to her through the ministry of people in the body of Christ like Neil Anderson. I pray that You would show her exactly what she needs to do to revisit the time when Satan gained an entrance into her heart and mind and life, and that You would protect her from the evil one. Lord God, I pray the holy and precious Blood of Jesus over her and ask that You do whatever it takes to allow that powerful Blood to cleanse _____ and make her holy and pure and freed from the traps of the enemy. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Let me know what happens, OK?

“How Can a Just God Order the Slaughter of Men, Women and Children?”

I am a Christian and spend time talking with others often about God, but I have been speechless when they bring up the issue, for example, in I Samuel 15:1-3 where God tells His people to destroy the men and the women and children as well. This is difficult to see that as part of His character. Is that a just God? What was He thinking?? I understand that the Amalekites ambushed them when travelling from Egypt but why the women and children?? I would really appreciate your reply. Thank you.

This is indeed a question often asked by critics of the Bible. It is a legitimate question and one that deserves a comprehensive, complete and, hopefully, acceptable answer. So let me see if I can address it.

One of the most important rules of Hermeneutics (the task of interpretation, meaning of a verse or passage of Scripture) is to observe the *context* of what you are seeking to interpret correctly. This is crucial in seeking to answer this question you have raised. We need to see clearly the historical background and the situation which called for such severe measures to be taken.

Who were the Canaanites?

Canaan, the Bible tells us, was the fourth son of Ham, who was one of the three sons of Noah. The use of the word "Canaan" stems from the fact that Canaan's descendants populated the land which was later called Palestine, and now is called Israel. Modern Syria is also included and it is roughly the same land which God promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21; Numbers 34:1-12).

The Amalekites which you mentioned were one of several tribes which are often referred to collectively as either Canaanites or Phoenicians. Their language was either Ugaritic or Phoenician, two Semitic dialects close to the Hebrew dialect. Other major "Canaanite" tribes included the Amorites, Jebusites, Hivites, Girgasites, Ammonites, Edomites, and Moabites. The Phoenicians were a sea-faring people who lived along the Mediterranean Coast. They also had colonies which included Cypress, Sardinia, and Carthage.

What were their Religious beliefs and practices?

Archaeology has given us substantial material about these people, and particularly from their capital city, Ugarit. Thousands of clay tablets have been recovered from Ras Shamra in northern Syria, including the libraries of two great temples dating from the 15th-14th century B.C. Much of this epic literature has to do with their religious practices and their pantheon of gods. Merrill F. Unger notes that Canaanite cultic practices were more base than any other place in the ancient Near East. (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p.172). Let me list some of the features of their religious beliefs and practices.

The Canaanite Pantheon (of gods)

A full description of the Canaanite gods has been provided by C. R. Driver, who translated the Ras Shamra tablets found in the ancient city of Ugarit.

EL

The head of the Canaanite pantheon. El was generally a rather remote and shadowy figure, but sometimes stepped down from his eminence and became the hero of exceedingly "earthy" myths. He is described as living at a great distance ("a thousand plains, ten thousand fields,") from Canaan, and to this remote spot the gods invariably had to travel when they wished to consult him.

El was called the "father of years," the "father of man," and also the "father bull," i.e. the progenitor of all the gods. He is likened to a bull in the midst of a herd of cows and calves. According to the text, El had three wives: Astarte (goddess of the evening star), Asherah (goddess of the sea and consort to Baal), and Baaltis—all three his sisters. He is a brutal, bloody tyrant, whose acts caused all the gods to be terrified by his decisions. For example, he dethroned his own father ("Heaven, Uranus") and castrated him; he killed his own favorite son, "Iadid," and cut off his daughter's head. The tablets also portray El as seducing two women, whose names are not mentioned, and he allows them to be driven into the desert after the birth of two children, "Dawn" (shahru) and "Sunset" (shalmu). W. F. Albright in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, XXXV, comments that the description of the act of seduction of these two women is one of the frankest and most sensuous in ancient Near-Eastern literature.

Baal and Mot

Baal is the great storm-god. He brings the rain, and announces his present with thunder and lightning and, most important of all, the needed rain which would insure a good harvest. He became the reigning king of the gods, and was enthroned on a lofty mountain in the far northern heavens, but faithfully reappears each year to sustain the people. Mot, whose name means "death," represents the god of "drought" and "sterility." In the myth, he is Baal's chief and continual antagonist. Even Baal must yield to Mot when his time (of the year) comes. When Mot comes, Baal's time is over and he is

ordered to take everything connected with him down into the depths of the earth:

“And you, take your clouds,
Your wind, your storm, your rains!
With you take Padriya daughter of the stream.
With you take Tatalliya daughter of rain.”(67:v:6-11)

The situation could hardly be more clearly described: the season of drought has come, the rain and the clouds have vanished; the streams have dried up and the vegetation languishes. But before Baal descends into the earth, however, he

*“Makes love to a heifer in Debir,
A young cow in the fields of Shimmt.
He lies with her seventy-seven times—
Yea, he copulates eighty-eight times—
So she conceives and bears a child.”(76:v;18-22)*

Anath

The goddess of fertility. She was considered a divine prostitute. She is represented as a naked woman in the prime of life, standing on a lion, with a lily in one hand and a serpent or two in the other. Often two rams are present to portray her sexual vigor. The female organs are always accentuated.

It is important to bear in mind that these “myths” were ritualistically enacted. Therefore we can assume that ritual bestiality was practiced by the priesthood, and temple prostitution was practiced by the adherents (priestesses) of the Anath fertility cult. Cyrus Gordan has written “that it was no crime for men to copulate with animals in Ugarit is indicated by the fact that...Baal impregnated a heifer...a myth...enacted ritually by reputable priests... Moreover, the Bible tells us that the Hebrews’ pagan neighbors practiced bestiality (Lev. 18:24) as we now know to be literally true

from the Ugaritic documents" (Ugaritic Literature, p. 8).

With Baal's seasonal death, his father, El, the chief god, goes into mourning. El descends from his throne and sits in sackcloth and ashes on the ground. He lacerates himself, making cuts on his face, arms chest and back (cf. I Kings 18:28):

"Dead is Baal, the Overcomer
Absent is the Prince, Lord (Baal) of the Earth (67:VI:9,10)
He pours the ashes of grief on his head.
The dust of mourning on his pate;
For clothing, he is covered with sackcloth,
He roams the mountain in mourning:
He mutilates his face and beard.
He lacerates his forearms.
He plows his chest like a garden.
He lacerates his back like a valley
He lifts his voice and shouts: 'Baal is dead!'
Woe to the people, Woe to the multitudes of Baal
I shall go down into the earth." (67:VI:15-24)

Anath, Baal's consort, repeats this cry and copies El's self-mutilation.

How does God, the Bible, portray the Canaanites? The clearest and most comprehensive biblical assessment of the Canaanites is found in Leviticus 18:1-5:

"Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, I am the Lord your God. You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do *what is done in the land of Canaan* where I am bringing you; *you shall not walk in their statutes* (ways). You are to perform My judgments and keep my statutes, to live in accord with them. I am the Lord your God. So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the Lord."

By inference, everything forbidden in this chapter is simply a description of what the Canaanites were doing. First on the list of forbidden practices is incest, sexual intercourse with blood relatives and in-laws: your father and mother (v.7,8), your sister (v. 9), your daughter (v. 10), your niece (v. 11), your aunt (v.12, 13), your uncle (v.15), your sister-in-law (v.16), any woman or her children (17), polygamy (two sisters-v.18), adultery (your neighbor's wife-v. 20), ritual child sacrifice (v.21), homosexuality, sodomy (v.22), bestiality (animals-v. 23). God summarizes these prohibitions with:

“Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled. For the land has become defiled, therefore I have visited its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants. But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and my judgments, and shall not do any of these abominations, neither the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you; for the men of the land who have been before you have done ALL these abominations, and the land has become defiled; so that the land may not spew you out should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you. For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people. Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the Lord your God.” (Lev. 18:24-30).

God's Purpose and Intent

What we observe above is in stark contrast to the cultic practices of the Canaanites, the high standards and expectations of conduct laid out by the God of Israel for His people. Why is it so important that the Israelites shun these practices of the indigent population, the Canaanites?

Because God is doing something new, something important. He

has redeemed his chosen people from Egyptian bondage and is in the process of fulfilling his ancient promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12. The larger plan involves an earlier promise (Genesis 3:15) that there would come a "Seed of the Woman" who would crush Satan and establish a means to undo the damage done in Eden through their disobedience. This plan of redemption is promised, and the remainder of the Old Testament is a working out in history the unfolding of that plan to provide a Savior, a Redeemer, a Messiah. Jesus is the fulfillment of this promise.

And in Abraham God found a worthy servant who would become the patriarch, the father of a nation through whom Messiah would come, bringing untold blessing and deliverance through his life, death, and resurrection to all those who believe. Redemptive history is a long process. It began in Eden immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, and it will one day end in the New Jerusalem.

God's peculiar people begin with Abraham and his immediate descendants: first Isaac, then Jacob, and then Joseph. These four were the founders, the patriarchs of this new people God was shaping to be the vehicle through which Messiah would come. The Israelites then spent four hundred years in bondage in Egypt until Moses was raised up to deliver them with "a strong hand." Pharaoh finally let them go. They traveled to Mt. Sinai and stayed there a full year. They arrived at Sinai a disorganized mob; they left there a year later an organized host. During that year God revealed to them the constitutional foundations of their heritage and their mission. He spelled out the rules of their conduct, their worship, and how they would live in community. At the end of this year, they were poised east of the Jordan and ready to go into Canaan and take it by force. But after spying out the land, the fear of the majority with respect to this campaign caused them to shrink back from their task, and God sent them into the wilderness to wander for forty years. The new generation that emerged at the

close of this period of divine discipline was finally allowed to go into the Canaan and possess it.

As they prepared themselves for this task, Moses summarized for a second time (the book of Deuteronomy) just what it would take, and what they would have to do. Ironically, the issue of the Canaanites is first spoken of way back in Genesis 15! God is speaking to Abraham and He mentions the problem of the Canaanites. He first speaks of (predicts) the Egyptian bondage which would come, and then He speaks of the deliverance from Egypt, and then He promises the conquest and repossession of the Promised Land. He says:

Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions... And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. Then, in the fourth generation they shall return here (Canaan) *for the iniquity of the Amorite (Canaanites) is not yet **complete*** (Gen. 15:12-16).

What is interesting about this is that the wickedness of the Canaanites is already recognized as a problem 400+ years before God will give the command that the Canaanites are to be slaughtered—men, women, and children! At the time the Lord spoke these words to Abraham (c. 2,000 B.C.), the Canaanites were already corrupt, but they still had a way to go before God, who is a patient, merciful but Holy God, would finally bring judgment upon them. God gave them 400 years to “shape up,” but we find them even more wicked than ever when the Israelites are about to invade (retake) their land!

What is also interesting is that when Jericho was about to be taken, Rahab the prostitute hid the two Israeli spies in her home, lied to the authorities about it, and then helped the spies escape over the wall. While the spies were in her home

she said some remarkable things:

“She came up to them on the roof and said to them, I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the Amorites whom you utterly destroyed beyond the Jordan... And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the Lord, your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. Now therefore, please swear to me by the Lord, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with me...and deliver our lives from death.” (Joshua 2:8-13)

Not only Rahab knew of God’s powerful deliverance; she tells us that everyone else knew about these events and were fearful for their lives! The difference between Rahab and the rest of the people of Jericho is that she saw in these mysterious workings none other than the hand of the true God Himself! She repented; she believed! Because of her faith, she is mentioned in Faith’s Hall of Fame (Hebrews 11:31)! My point is that other Canaanites could have responded as she did. Unfortunately, they continued on in their wicked, rebellious ways. The fullness of the “Amorites” is now complete. National judgment is at hand, with Israel as the instrument God will use to put an end to a totally depraved culture.

Why Such Excessive Slaughter? Why the Women? Why the Children?

God explains this to us in Romans 1:17-2:2:

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

For since the creation of the world His invisible

attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an *image* in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to *impurity*, that their bodies might be *dishonored* among them. For they exchanged the *truth of God* for a lie, and worshipped and served the *creature* rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this reason God *gave them over to degrading* passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is *unnatural*, and in the same way also the men *abandoned* the natural function of the woman and *burned in their desire* towards one another, *men with men* committing *indecent acts* and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God *gave them over to a depraved mind*, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, *haters of God*, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, with out understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and though they know the ordinance of God, that *those who practice such things are worthy of death*, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you...and we

know that the judgment of God *rightfully falls upon those who practice such things.*"

The Romans passage above describes for us in vivid detail how this can happen to a culture. And this is exactly the kind of conditions existing in Canaan as the Israelites approached to conquer the land which had been promised them. God makes it very clear to them the reasons for what they must do and how they must do it:

"Hear, O Israel! You are crossing over the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you... Know therefore today that *it is the Lord your God who is crossing over* before you as a *consuming fire*. *He will destroy them and He will subdue them before you*, so that you may drive them out and destroy them quickly, just as the Lord has spoken to you.

Do not say in your heart when the Lord your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of *my* righteousness the Lord has brought me in to possess this land,' but *it is because of the wickedness of these nations* that the Lord is dispossessing them before you... It is not for *your* righteousness or for the uprightness of *your* heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the *wickedness of these nations* that the Lord your God is driving them out before you, in order to *confirm the oath which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*.

Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn (stiff necked) people!" (Deuteronomy 9:1-6)

God makes it very clear that sometimes things deteriorate so far that a culture or a people reaches a "point of no return." The remedy is like trying to unscramble an egg. There is just

no way back; things have gone too far. The story of the Genesis Flood is "Exhibit One"—a demonstration that He has already done this once on this planet. A good surgeon does not amputate a leg if someone has a severely stubbed toe. But a good surgeon will amputate if the infection is so massive that to refuse to do so would mean the loss of the whole body and person.

R.A. Torrey remarks: "It is appalling that any people should be utterly put to the sword, but it is even more appalling that a society of people should have become so corrupt and debased that such treatment is deemed necessary in the interest of humanity. The Canaanites were a moral cancer threatening the very life of the whole human race. The cancer had to be removed in order to save the body, just as a surgeon inflicts pain and suffering in order to remove a malignant growth in the body (*Difficulties in the Bible*. R.A. Torrey, p. 47).

This is exactly the dilemma God faced as the Israelites are brought back to possess their land. To settle them in the midst of these depraved people is asking for disaster. If the cancer remains, Israel will not survive. For Israel's survival, the Canaanites will have to go. Israel will be corrupted by their presence and their influence. She will fall away from the Lord Who has loved her and delivered her. Ironically, this is exactly what happened, because while they disposed of most of the inhabitants of Canaan, *they did not remove all of them*. And Israel's incomplete obedience in this matter actually brought about future, periodic relapses when they *did* cease "following the Lord" and served other gods through the ongoing influence of these pagan tribes.

With respect to the women, the experience of Lot, his wife, and his two daughters dwelling in Sodom is instructive. We are told that if ten righteousness men could have been found in the city, God would spare it from judgment. Judgment fell on the city, indicating ten were not found. Lot was "courting

disaster" to be a believer and live in such an environment. As the account indicates, Lot survived the judgment because God graciously warned him to flee the city (this was really based upon God's honoring Abraham's intercession on Lot's behalf), but his wife turned around and looked back toward Sodom. This was her home. She liked Sodom. The immorality didn't bother her. She was still yearning for Sodom when God turned her into a pillar of salt. In some instances, the women are the "prime-movers" in leading the men into sin. Torrey comments: "Though true women are nobler than true men, depraved women are more dangerous than depraved men" (p. 48).

The two daughters were also affected. They had sense enough not to turn around and look at the city, but we find in their immoral, incestuous behavior with their own father later that they were already "damaged goods." This is a good warning for Christian parents. We may choose to live in or near "Sodom" and we ourselves may survive, but it is more than likely our children will not come away unaffected by their exposure to such an unwholesome environment.

With respect to the command to dispose of the children, there is at least one bright spot, severe as it is. Those who adopt children want to do so at the earliest possible age. Why? Because evidence shows that children are early affected by whatever their family system might be. The emotional and physical abuse and wounds inflicted upon them from birth to age five or six leave permanent scars which often cannot be healed. The scars remain, and even the best of environments cannot overcome the negative influences of those early years of development. Even these Canaanite children would have perpetuated the corrupt influence of the Canaanites among the Hebrew Community, had they been spared.

We have all observed or known of families which are so dysfunctional and corrupt we grieve for their unhappy, confused, and suffering children, and wish to God somehow they could be removed and placed in some loving, caring home where

they could feel safe and not suffer at the hands of hostile and even deranged parents. Happily, there are no children in hell. Jesus loves the little children. The one bright spot in this sordid story is that God removed an entire generation of Canaanite children and took them to such a home . . . His home.

Those who struggle the most with the forceful elimination of the Canaanites in this biblical account have a very dim and truncated view of God. We have seen above that God has the right, because of His holiness and His righteousness, to visit judgment upon individuals and nations who have become corrupt and degenerate. The amazing thing is, like with the Canaanites, that He waits so long. Torrey remarks,

“...Those who regard sin lightly and who have no adequate conception of God’s holiness will always find insurmountable difficulty in this command of God, but those who have come to see the awfulness of sin and have learned to hate it with the infinite hate it deserves, and who have caught some glimpses of the infinite holiness of God and have been made in some measure partakers of that holiness, will, after mature reflection, have no difficulty whatever with this command. It is consciousness of sin in our own hearts and lives that makes us rebel against God’s stern dealings with sin (p. 50).”

I hope this in some way helps to address your question,
_____.

God Bless.

Jimmy Williams, Founder
Probe Ministries

“What Comes After Post-Modern?”

If this is the post-modern age, what will the next age be?

Wow! What a difficult question. I'm not sure that we can accurately answer such a question. I liken the discussion to trying to define a word that hasn't been put in the dictionary yet. The jury is still out on what the word will mean. For now, it's slang. It'll mean one thing in one setting and may mean another completely different idea in other settings. Postmodernism has been the greased pig of the state fair competitions. No one has captured it yet to fry it up in a pan. How can we define view of a time period that is still being hashed out? It would be like choosing *Time* magazine's Man of the Year of 2001 in July. September 11th hadn't even happened yet. When our children hear 2001 they'll most likely think of the terrorism and how George W. Bush responded as our leader. So how can we predict a reaction of a way of thinking that hasn't even tucked itself to bed yet?

Another example would be me trying to determine what my grandchildren will look like before even having my own children. I have no idea even what my children will look like. I have no idea who they might marry. I have no idea what kinds of events may occur to change their appearance: such as fads, accidents, exercise habits, etc. The best I can do is suppose that there will be some kind of resemblance to me.

But let's give it a try. Who knows? Maybe I can coin a movement or something in my presumptuousness. Many scholars expect some kind of return to pre-modern thinking. Of course, we can't call the next movement pre-modernism. We already have one of those. Perhaps “neo-modernism” will rise from the ashes of postmodernity. As postmodernism has critiqued the certainty and absolutes of modernity, perhaps “neo-modernity” will seek

to find balance between certainty and skepticism. Honestly, I can glean truth from both dispositions. I can also see detrimental holes in both movements. Perhaps neo-modernism will rescue us from the idea that man is the measure of all things while preserving the fact that truth exists. Perhaps it can also harmonize our desire to see the viewpoints of others without giving in to the danger of political correctness. But let's not be too presumptuous. Modernity is not even dead yet. There are still plenty of folks, in the church and outside of it, that are modernists. Could we or our children live in a day when modernists, postmodernists, and "neo-modernists" all live concurrently? How would that work?

This is more or less a guessing game of entertainment caliber. I have to be honest. Even as I write this I'm shocked by the biblical support for what I just termed as neo-modernity. Isn't what I said just another way of saying Christian? Perhaps we shouldn't get too caught up in any movement, but simply seek to remain true to biblical suppositions. I'm not even sure if all these labels are worth their characterizations anyway. Everyone seems so serious about defining ourselves.

If experience serves as a teacher, we may be on the doorstep of still more confusion. I've been an Arminian, a Calvinist, a Baptist, a Lutheran, a liberal, a conservative, a pre-tribber, a mid-tribber, a son, a father, a philosopher, and a philo-SELF-er. The bottom line is that Christ and Him crucified has been the only constant in my life. He has seen me through all those days of extremes, and He will be my Lord whether I'm a postmodernist, modernist, or a neo-modernist. The name game is only that, a game.

But on a lighter note, I want to be the guy that started the neo-modernist movement. HAHA.

Kris Samons

“What Do We Do When Critics Point to the Atrocities of the Crusades?”

This is a great website. I have benefited from the strong biblical perspectives you provide here and on AFR Radio station KAMA in Sioux City, Iowa.

What I am looking for is accurate info regarding the Crusades. Everywhere I turn, some “bible basher” is criticizing Christianity for all the people it has murdered in the name of religion. . .the Crusades is ONE of those examples that is thrown in our faces. We want to know how to intelligently respond with FACTS.

What do you have that could help?

Dear _____:

Thank you for your recent e-mail regarding the Crusades. Let me see if I can give you some help on this.

To begin with, a Christian response to charges like this one must be honest with the facts of history. The truth of the matter is that the historical, institutional Church and true, Biblical Christianity have not always been synonymous. There is no way that we should try to defend or excuse those times and incidents where the Church has erred from her calling and failed to emulate and model the teachings of its Founder. In short, the Christian Church, in all of its forms—Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant—has a “checkered”

past. Where the church has failed, we must agree with our critics. The Pope's recent apology in Jerusalem for the Church's failure to take the lead in preventing the Holocaust is a current example.

But we should also know our history, and the Crusades is a good case in point. Most critics of our faith make sweeping generalizations about the Church's failure in a certain issue or event (like the Crusades) and assign to her *all* the blame. Another tactic is to just ignore other factors which might interfere with the case they are trying to make against Christianity.

This is not a new problem. Tertullian, one of the early church fathers (c.200 A.D.) complained that whether the Tiber flooded, or there was an earthquake, or a famine, etc., Rome's answer was, "The Christians to the Lions!"

It is important for us in historical analysis to make a clear distinction between the ideals, teachings, and practices of Our Lord and the lives, and often questionable behavior, of all professing Christians—be they ecclesiastical bodies, "Christian" nations, or individuals. In short:

Renaissance popes are **not** Christianity; St. Francis of Assisi **is**.

Pizarro and Cortez are **not** Christianity; Bartolome de Las Casas **is**.

Captain Ball, a Yankee Slaver, is **not** Christianity; William Wilberforce **is**.

And when we come to the Crusaders, we find we are faced with a "mixed multitude." First, we have the Pope, who, along with his colleagues, thought it shameful the Holy Land was possessed by the infidel. Secondly, we have genuine parishioners, from peasants to nobles, who sincerely desired to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. These tens of thousands went with a true spiritual purpose (many died on the way) and

are not guilty of the charge above. And third, we have a large contingent of men who were motivated by two primary things: economic gain, and the automatic promise from the Church that they could “skip” Purgatory” and be assured of heaven if they “took up the Cross” and died fighting in their mission to reclaim the Holy Land for Christianity. This Christian “*Jihad*” could be said to have promised “All this, and heaven too!”

If you want a good book about this, I would recommend a readable volume simply entitled *The Crusades* by Zoe Oldenbourg. You should be able to get it in any library. It was published in 1966 by Pantheon Books. Oldenbourg is a Russian Jewess who lived much of her life in Paris.

This book almost reads like a novel and is fascinating.. Before she begins her account she gives a marvelous description of what western Europe was like at the time of the Crusades. Conditions were, at the time, just the opposite from what they are today. Now, the wealth and industry is in the West, while the Middle East is blighted and “third-worldish” (excepting huge wealth in the East held by the few who control vast oil holdings), then, it was the West that was blighted and primitive, while the Middle East possessed vast wealth and contained great, opulent cities.

Many of the Crusading Knights who joined the Crusades were second and third sons, who were not entitled to an inheritance because of the practice of *primogeniture*—the exclusive right of the first born to a Father’s Estate. From the “get-go” these men demonstrated their prime motive for joining the Crusade: economic gain.

From beginning to end, the Crusades are truly a trail of tears. . .from the (1) pogroms in various cities where thousands of Jews died at the hands of the Crusaders as they journeyed East toward the Holy Land, to the (2) “peeling off” of many knights as the great cities of the Levant were reached [Edessa, Tarsus, Aleppo, Damascus, Antioch, Acre. Some of them

never even got to Jerusalem! Greedily, they captured a city by force, put themselves in charge, and lived in new-found luxury], to (3) the capture of Jerusalem and the complete massacre of all its inhabitants—both Jews and Muslims, to the (4) other sorry Crusades that followed, the last of which, when the Crusaders found themselves at the gates of Constantinople, decided to just attack and sack *it* instead!

Other “black marks” which critics pounce on include: (1) virulent anti-Semitism, practiced by Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and even Protestant (including Martin Luther himself), (2) the Inquisition, (3) the torture and burning of heretics and witches, (4) the practice of slavery, (5) the treatment and destruction of native populations [the Irish, the Indians of the Americas, the African Tribes, the island populations in both Oceans], (6) treatment of women, and (7) all “Religious” wars.

Here again we cannot defend the actions of “Christian” people. We must quickly agree with our critics. At the same time, we must press home the idea *that the Church is **not** our model. . . **Jesus** is.* Where His teachings and His personal example have been followed many positive things have helped to change society in such ways that much of the world is still benefiting from His impact. Even the critics have to recognize this.

I will close with these quotes written by three eminent historians, R.R. Palmer, Roland H. Bainton, and W.E.H Lecky:

“It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the coming of Christianity. It brought with it, for one thing, an altogether new sense of human life. For the Greeks had shown man his mind; but the Christians showed him his soul. They taught that in the sight of God, all souls were equal, that every human life was sacrosanct and inviolate. Where the Greeks had identified the beautiful and the good, had thought ugliness to be bad, had shrunk from disease and

imperfection and from everything misshapen, horrible, and repulsive, the Christian sought out the diseased, the crippled, the mutilated, to give them help. Love for the ancient Greek, was never quite distinguished from Venus. For the Christians who held that God was love, it took on deep overtones of sacrifice and compassion.” (Palmer)

“The history of Christianity is inseparable from the history of Western culture and of Western society. For almost a score of centuries Christian beliefs, principles, and ideals have colored the thoughts and feelings of Western man. The traditions and practices have left an indelible impression not only on developments of purely religious interest, but on virtually the total endeavor of man. This has been manifest in art and literature, science and law, politics and economics, and, as well, in love and war. Indeed, the indirect and unconscious influence Christianity has often exercised in avowedly secular matters—social, intellectual, and institutional—affords striking proof of the dynamic forces that have been generated by the faith over the millenniums. Even those who have contested its claims and rejected its tenets have been affected by what they opposed. Whatever our beliefs, all of us today are inevitable heirs to this abundant legacy; and it is impossible to understand the cultural heritage that sustains and conditions our lives without considering the contributions of Christianity.

“Since the death of Christ, his followers have known vicissitudes as well as glory and authority. The Christian religion has suffered periods of persecution and critical divisions within its own ranks. It has been the cause and the victim of war and strife. It has assumed forms of astonishing variety. It has been confronted by revolutionary changes in human and social outlooks and subjected to searching criticism. The culture of our own time, indeed has been termed the most completely secularized form of culture the world has ever known. We live in what some have called

the post-Christian age. Yet wherever we turn to enrich our lives, we continue to encounter the lasting historical realities of Christian experience and tradition.” (Bainton).

“. . .[T]he greatest religious change in the history of mankind took place under the eyes of a brilliant galaxy of philosophers and historians who disregard as contemptible powerful moral lever that has ever been applied to the affairs of men.” (Lecky, *History of European Morals*).

Hope this helps answer your question, _____.

Jimmy Williams
Founder, Probe Ministries

P.S. I'll have to dig out the reference sources for Palmer and Bainton, but wanted to get this to you now.

“What are the Best Scientific Evidences for a Young Earth/Old Earth?”

I read with great interest your article on the Origins Web site “[Christian Views of Science and Earth History](#).” I am doing research on this age issue, focusing on the scientific data especially. The earth is either young or is old. You said it well, “all truth is God’s truth.” I am looking for the best scientific evidences for a young earth/old earth and want to investigate what the other side would say to those opposing arguments. Can you help me out with this?

There are several books I can recommend.

From a biblical perspective, there is a recent volume titled *Three Views on Creation and Evolution* edited by J. P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds in the Counterpoints series from Zondervan (1999). Hugh Ross has his *The Genesis Question* for an old earth perspective, and there is Henry Morris's *The Genesis Record* and John Whitcomb's *The Early Earth* from a young earth perspective.

From a scientific perspective, Hugh Ross wrote his definitive biblical and scientific treatise on the old earth called *Creation and Time* in 1994 from NavPress. Young earth creationists Van Bebbler and Taylor published a response titled *Creation and Time: A Report on the Progressive Creationist Book by Hugh Ross* also in 1994 from Eden Productions. ICR (The Institute for Creation Research) has published numerous technical monographs on a young earth which can be viewed and ordered at www.icr.org. Other young earth books, including Russ Humphrey's *Starlight and Time* can be found there, as well as at the Answers in Genesis website, www.answersingenesis.org. Hugh Ross' organization Reasons to Believe also has online ordering at www.reasons.org.

This should give you more than enough to get started on.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries