



6

How Old Is the Earth?

Key Themes

- The Bible records the true history of mankind and the universe.
- God's Word must be the absolute authority.

Key Passages

- Genesis 5:1–32, 11:10–26

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the source of the biblical age of the earth.
- Identify the source of the secular age of the earth.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

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Students will review the books of the Old Testament. (There are many songs online that could make this easier and more fun for your students.)



Activity 1: How Many Years?

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Students will determine the age of the earth using Genesis and other sources.



Studying God's Word

page 6

The Bible provides a clear date for creation, showing a young earth. The dating methods used by many scientists to determine the earth's age as billions of years old are not right and go against God's Word.



Activity 2: Memory Verse Puzzle

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Students will put the Memory Verse puzzle together then recite the memory verse to the class.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- If you haven't already done this, print and cut out sets of the Books of the Old Testament cards from the Resource DVD-ROM, Lesson 1 (on cardstock). Make one set for every 4–5 students.

- Books of the Old Testament cards, one set for every 4–5 students



HOW MANY YEARS?

- Print one How Many Years? worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- How Many Years? worksheet for each student
- Crayons
- Calculator (optional)



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one copy of the Memory Verse Song sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM, Lesson 1.
- Bring in some rocks and/or fossils for use during the lesson.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Several rocks and fossils to use during the dating discussion
- Memory Verse Song sheet



MEMORY VERSE PUZZLE

- Print one Memory Verse puzzle from the Resource DVD-ROM. Make copies of the puzzle on cardstock and cut out for each student. Keep the answer key for your own use.

- Memory Verse puzzle for each student
- Memory Verse puzzle answer key
- Optional: Small rewards for those who can recite (or sing) the memory verse



Memory Verse

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Begin your preparation this week by looking at these key passages: Genesis 5 and Genesis 11:10–26.

So, now that you've read the key passages listed above, is your head spinning? We often rush through the genealogies of the Bible, laughing at our inability to pronounce the difficult names. But this time, take note of the details given in these two chapters. Genesis 5 recounts the ten generations before the Flood; Genesis 11 lists the ten generations after the Flood. When God includes such specific details, He intends for us to take notice.

Unlike a genealogy that simply lists the order of lineage, these passages contain ages and enough detail for the reader to determine the time span. They serve as "birth certificates," and allow us to calculate the time from Adam to Abraham. Each generation builds on the one before it, so we can add the years together to determine when Adam was created and the approximate age of the earth.

As we add up the years from Adam to Abraham, we get approximately 2,000 years. Historically it has been agreed upon by Christian and non-Christian historians alike that Abraham lived about 2,000 years before Christ. If we add the 2,000 years that have passed since Jesus's birth, we get an accurate age of roughly 6,000 years.

Were there billions of years that passed *before* Adam was created? No! The Bible says that Adam was created on the sixth day of creation (Genesis 1:26, 31) and that God created at the "beginning" (Genesis 1:1). Jesus Himself confirmed His belief in the creation account when He acknowledged that Adam and Eve were created at "the beginning of creation" (Mark 10:6).

There are many Christians and non-Christians who, in an attempt to make the universe older than it is, will say there are gaps in the genealogies recorded in Genesis. They argue that the word *begat* allows for generation skipping. However, the Hebrew word for *begat* (*yalad*) means a literal father/son relationship. Nowhere in the Old Testament is *yalad* used in any other way than to mean a single-generation (father/son or mother/daughter) relationship.

The genealogies are important to our history and should be read just as they are written. They are given to us to verify that the Bible is real history and that we are all descendants of a real man, Adam. We can trust these genealogies to give us accurate information

because they are a part of the infallible, inerrant Word of God.

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

The belief that scientists have "proved" the earth to be billions of years old is a major reason many in the church have abandoned the biblical account of creation. However, contrary to popular belief, radiometric dating does not prove the earth is old.

All radiometric dating methods are based on the rate that radioactive elements decay in the rocks. Geologists refer to "parent" elements in rock decaying to "daughter" elements in the rock. By measuring how much "parent" and "daughter" elements are in a specimen, scientists try to calculate how old it is.

However, these methods are based on assumptions that are neither testable nor provable. These old-earth geologists come up with faulty dates because they are relying on faulty assumptions. These assumptions are:

1. The assumption that we know the starting conditions of these rocks—particularly the ratio of parent atoms to daughter atoms in the rocks to begin with. No one can definitively explain the starting conditions because no one was there when they were formed. It is impossible to know the ratio when the rock was formed, so secular scientists assume there was 100% parent and no daughter.
2. The assumption that all of the daughter atoms found in a rock were formed from the parent atoms in the same rock. We have no way of knowing for sure that all of the daughter atoms in a rock came from parent atoms in the same rock. Contamination of some sort, from ground water, for example, could add or eliminate parent and/or daughter atoms to the rock, making any dating of this type unreliable.
3. The assumption that the rate of decay has always been constant. This is a dangerous assumption given that we weren't there and we don't know if the rate of decay has been the same over thousands of years.

In addition to these assumptions, there are documented examples of inaccurate radiometric dating. Following are just a few examples:

- A sample of the lava dome in the Mount St. Helens crater (that had been observed to form and cool in 1984) was analyzed in 1996. It contained so much argon-40 (daughter atoms) that it had a calculated "age" of 350,000 years!

- Lava flows on the sides of Mt. Ngauruhoe, New Zealand, known to be less than 50 years old, yielded radiometric “ages” of up to 3.5 million years.
- The same basalt flows on the top of Grand Canyon were tested using three different dating methods. The “ages” calculated were 916 million years, 1.143 billion years, and 2.6 billion years!

God’s Word unmistakably teaches a young earth and universe. God has ensured the accurate recording and preservation of His eyewitness account of the earth’s history, which Jesus Christ endorsed repeatedly during His earthly ministry. We must have confidence in what God has revealed to us in His Word and not allow man’s ideas to cause us to reinterpret it or compromise it in any way.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For centuries Christians have believed that God created the world in six literal days roughly 4,000 years before Jesus’s birth and that He judged the world by destroying it in the Flood of Noah’s day. It is only over the last 250 years that questions about the Bible’s record of time have arisen. Why? Christians and non-Christians swayed by the words of men began to try to fit billions of years of earth history into the Bible. The anti-biblical, philosophical assumptions that were used to interpret rocks and fossils threw the door wide open for doubting, manipulating, and questioning God’s Word.

Even before the technology of radiometric dating was available, the shift in belief from the young earth to the faulty old-earth theories invented by man was leading to the idea of Darwinian evolution. Consequently, an avalanche of anti-biblical science appeared on the

scene. It wasn’t long before many church leaders began to embrace the old-age theories and made efforts to fit the ages into the Bible. Today, placing man’s knowledge above what Scripture says has become commonplace. Sadly, interpretations of science, and tradition, often influence Christians more than Scripture itself.

But does the age of the earth really matter? Consider this. The Bible gives a detailed record of the age of the earth in the Genesis genealogy passages. Choosing to discount that part of the Bible because it doesn’t line up with what we’ve heard from the scientific community, or the media, is placing man’s knowledge above the authority of Scripture. If we are unable to take Genesis 1–11 as documented history, then how are we to believe the rest of the Bible? The Bible must be the final authority on all the matters it speaks of—not just the moral and spiritual. Every Word of God is true. It is the history book of the universe and we dare not presume to know more than the Creator God.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Omniscient and sovereign God, I praise you for your Word. I recognize that it is completely sufficient for me. Your Word is living, and I continue to learn as I study to teach others about you. Show me your wisdom, Lord, and bless my students this week. Use me to present your truth clearly so these students will have a better understanding of the age of the earth, and be prepared to answer the attacks on your Word that are so prevalent today.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will work together in groups of 4–5 to put the Books of the Old Testament cards in order. They can use the Books of the Bible poster and their own Bibles.
- They will read (or sing) aloud all the names of the books of the Old Testament.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme posters from previous weeks, quickly review the lessons with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you review the Lesson Theme posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.

Before we get started today, let's practice our memory verse by singing the song we have been practicing. Everyone stand up and let's sing. Sing the Exodus 20:11 Memory Verse song to the tune of the ABCs. Refer to the song sheet on the DVD-ROM. See if any children can sing it on their own yet.



How Many Years?

MATERIALS

- How Many Years? worksheet for each student
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Pass out the worksheets to each student. Have the children fill in the blanks as you teach. They will also use it to follow and better understand the genealogies from Genesis 5 and 11. Next to each name is the age of that man when his son was born. By adding these numbers together, we get the number of years from Adam to Abraham. In order to keep your students' attention through the long list, have them

circle each number that is more than 100. Or have them try to pronounce the difficult names!

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God wrote the Bible and we know there are no mistakes. God told us the names and ages of all the people in the genealogy—or family tree—from Adam to Abraham. We can figure out how old the earth really is based on God's Word. The earth is not billions of years old. It is only about 6,000 years old.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Genesis 5:1–32,
11:10–26

There are a lot of different ideas about how old the earth really is. It seems we are always hearing different numbers—but those numbers are often in the millions and billions of years. We know that God's Word is completely true. Today, let's find out what God says about the age of the earth.

Turn with me to Genesis 5. There are a lot of names in this chapter! Instead of reading all the names from the Bible, I am going to give you a sheet with all those names on it. They are the same names God has listed in Genesis 5 and 11. *Make sure everyone has a How Many Years? worksheet.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

Before we begin the verses in Genesis 5, there are a couple of words I want you to learn. One is the word begot. The Bible uses this word a lot. Look at that word on the top of your worksheet.

Begot: to become the father of

The word begot means to be the father of. Here it means one person—the father—has a son.

If we were to use you as an example, we would say [child's father's name] begot [child's name]. If we use me for an example, we would say [your father's name] begot [your name]. *Do this with several students until they understand what begot means. Have the children fill in the word "father" on the worksheet.*

? There is another interesting word in Genesis 5. It is genealogy. Can you say that with me?

? Does anyone know what a genealogy is? *Allow for answers.*

Genealogy: the study of a family tree

A genealogy is really just a study of ancestors, the people your family came from years ago. It is like a family tree. It traces your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great grandparents, and so on as far back as you can go. This chapter in Genesis is a genealogy. It is telling us about one very large family! On your worksheets fill in the blank by the word genealogy. A genealogy is the study of a family tree.

? OK. Now on to our list. What is the very first name on our list of names? *Adam.*

? Did anyone live before Adam? *No.*

? That is right! Adam was the very first person. So our genealogy starts right at the beginning! When was Adam created? *Refer to the Lesson Theme poster from Lesson 1, if necessary. Day 6.*

The Bible is telling us about all the people who lived, starting with the very first person, Adam!

- ? Next to Adam's name is a number. What is the number? *130. Have students circle this number.*

Right! One hundred thirty is how old Adam was when he had his son Seth. See the name Seth? It is the next name on the list.

- ? How old was Seth when he had his son Enosh? *105. Have students circle this number.*

Right! You are getting this! Let's go down the list and you tell me how old each of these people was when he had his son. And each time the number next to a name is more than 100, circle that number. *Continue down list, having children call out the number after each name and circling those numbers more than 100.*

- ? Good job! Someone tell me who was the very oldest when his son was born. You have to look at your list. *Noah—500 years.*

- ? And who was the very youngest father on our genealogy? *Nahor—29 years.*

That's right. And do you see that Nahor was Abram's grandfather? Look at the list. Terah was Abram's father. So the next name up the list is Nahor. He was Abram's grandfather.

- ? Who would Abram's great-grandfather be? *Serug.*

That's right. And that is how a genealogy or family tree works. Everyone is related. In the same family!

- ? Take a look at the list. Are there any names that are familiar to you? Look closely. *Allow for discussion. Names that may be familiar are Adam, Noah, Abram, Methuselah.*

We know of Adam. He was the very first man. And then Noah. God spared him in the worldwide Flood. Abraham was an obedient man and there is an account of how he almost had to sacrifice his son. Methuselah was the oldest man who ever lived. He lived to be 969 years old!

Discover the Truth

But you know, even if you have never heard of some of these people before, they were all real people. God was sure to give us this very detailed list of names. And because we have it, we can begin to figure out how old the earth really is!

So let's add these numbers up! *Use the calculator to enter the numbers. Ask the children to call off the numbers down the list as you enter them in.*

- ? So, who can guess how many years this is? Anyone want to try? *Allow for some guesses.*

It comes to 1,946 years. That's almost 2,000 years! God wants us to know that there were about 2,000 years between Adam, the very first man,

➤ As you go through this section, have the children circle any of the numbers more than 100, but only as you discuss them!

and Abraham. Can you put that number on the blank line towards the bottom of your sheet? Adam to Abram was about 2,000 years.

The next blank line is for the number of years from Abraham to Jesus. We know from history that there were about 2,000 years between Abraham and Jesus. Can you put that number—2,000—on the next blank line? *Refer to the Seven C's Timeline during this discussion to give the children a real sense of the time.*

- ? So how many years do we have so far? What is 2,000 plus 2,000? *4,000.*
- ? We are getting closer to the answer to our question! What year is it now? Do you know? *Allow for answer.*
- ? It is 20___. And when Jesus was born the dating system had changed. In fact, Jesus was born very close to the year 1. So if He was born around the year 1 and we are now in the year 20___ . . . about how many years ago was Jesus born? *You can write this on the board as a math problem. Allow for answers.*

It was about 2,000 years ago that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born in Bethlehem. Now look at your worksheet and put the last number in. It was about 2,000 years ago that Jesus was born.

- ? OK. Who can add those three numbers for me? $2,000 + 2,000 + 2,000$. What do we get? *6,000. Be sure to refer to the Seven C's Timeline to show all of these segments of time.*
- ? That is about how old the earth is according to the Bible—6,000 years old! It is not billions of years old. We can trust God's Word. It even tells us the names of the people who lived after Adam. Fill in the last number on your worksheet. The earth is about 6,000 years old!

► Hold up and/or pass around rocks and fossils as examples during this section.

Now I have some rocks and fossils here. How can scientists come up with crazy dates like millions of years when they are trying to find the age of a rock or fossil? We just figured out that the earth is only 6,000 years old. *Allow for answers.*

Let me tell you. Scientists use several different ways to date rocks and fossils like these. They believe the dates can tell them the age of the earth. But the way they test the rocks and fossils is not always right.

For example, after a volcano named Mt. St. Helens erupted, rocks formed from the lava. Scientists watched as these rocks formed. Then, just 12 years later, they tried one of their tests to tell how old one of the rocks

was. They knew the rock was 12 years old. But when they used their test on the rock, it said it was 350,000 years old!

They were really off! The tests scientists use to tell us the age of old rocks and bones are wrong over and over again. Sometimes they test the very same rock with the very same test and they still can't get the age of the rock to match.

But we keep hearing how old things are, don't we? Just because we hear something over and over doesn't mean it is true! Just because we read something in a book doesn't mean the book is right! There is only one book ever written that has no mistakes.

? What book is that? *The Bible!*

God wrote the Bible and we know there are no mistakes. And God helped us to figure out the age of the earth by giving us the lists of people in Genesis 5 and 11. When we go to God's Word, we realize that the earth is just 6,000 years old.



Memory Verse Puzzle

MATERIALS

- One Memory Verse puzzle for each student
- Optional: Rewards for those who know the memory verse

INSTRUCTIONS

Remove or cover up the Memory Verse poster. Hand out a Memory Verse puzzle to each student. You can have them assemble the puzzles individually or divide the class into teams. Then have the children recite the verse from the puzzle. Then see if anyone can say it on his or her own.

We are going to review our memory verse—Exodus 20:11. After everyone gets a Memory Verse puzzle, I'll say "Go," and we'll see how quickly you can put it together.

When you are finished with the puzzle, stand up. Then I want to see who can recite it on his own.

Ready? "Go!" You may want to give small rewards—candy, bookmarks, treats—for those who know the verse already.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As you study and memorize this verse, you will realize that it confirms a lot of what we are studying. God created everything in six normal 24-hour days. And it was only 6,000 years ago . . . not millions of years ago!





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

To come up with the biblical age of the earth, we use God's Word, of course. Today we saw that the Bible tells us how old the earth is. We looked at all those names and ages in Genesis 5 and 11. They helped us to figure out that the earth is really just 6,000 years old.

Those who say the earth is billions of years old are not relying on God's Word. They are depending on dating methods that are not accurate. When you hear a scientist say that the earth is 4.5 billion years old and he can prove it by testing rocks and fossils, you need to remember that the tests are not right. Not only that, it is completely against what we learned in God's Word, which tells us the earth is 6,000 years old. There is quite a difference between 4.5 billion years and 6,000 years.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Does it really matter how old we believe the universe is? Well, does it matter whether or not we believe what God says? God has given us the Bible, and when we read it, we need to remember it is God's inspired Word. It is true!

So it does matter what we believe. We either believe what the Bible says or believe what different men say. The next time you hear anyone saying the earth is billions of years old, don't be afraid to speak up. Your friends and family may be surprised to learn about Genesis 5 and 11 and what the names and ages of the people listed there tell us.

Keep looking at the world through your biblical glasses!



► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for the privilege of being able to study His Word in this class.
- Thank God for giving us minds to think, so we can read and learn from His Word.