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Maturing the Message

Creationism and Biblical Authority in the Church

by Ken Ham [<http://answersingenesis.org/bios/ken-ham/>] on January 1, 2010; last featured October 14, 2012
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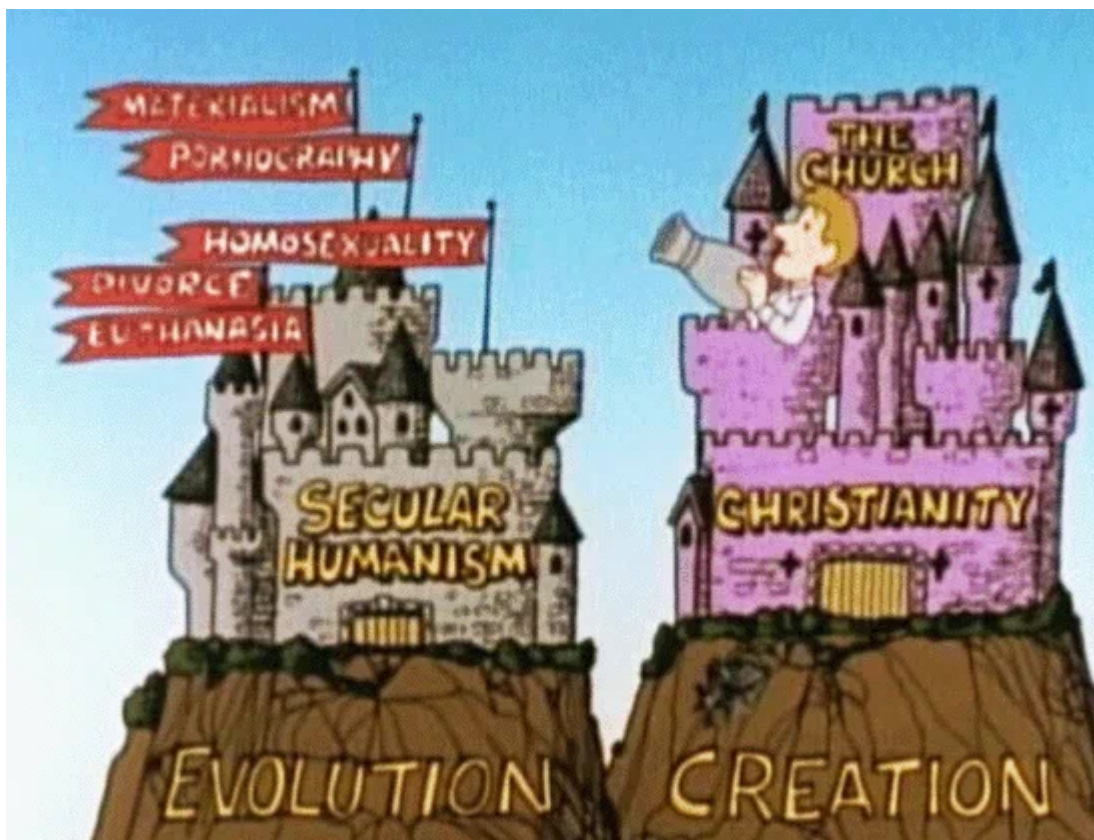
The creation message has matured over the past three decades, as the discernment and understanding of creationist leaders has matured. More and more, the emphasis is on the foundational issue: compromise of Genesis ultimately undermines the gospel itself.

Many people are familiar with the diagrams that have become known as the “castle illustrations,” which summarize the message of Answers in Genesis, the ministry that founded and operates the **Creation Museum** and **Answers magazine** [<http://answersingenesis.org/answers/magazine/>]. These diagrams were first produced around thirty years ago as I endeavored to illustrate, in diagram form, the concept of the foundational nature of the battle between Christianity and secular humanism.

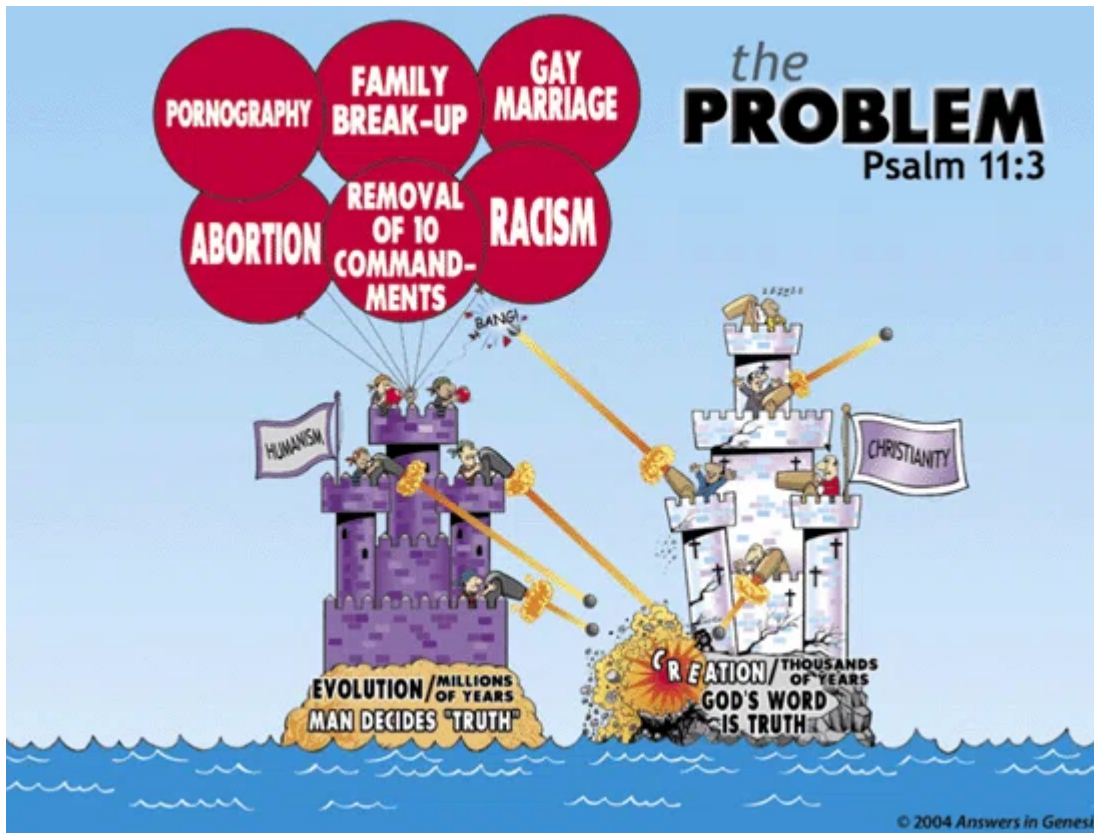
However, the castle diagrams we use today have changed significantly over the years—even though the basic message has remained the same.

One of those changes really reflects the maturing of the biblical **creation** [<http://answersingenesis.org/creation/>] message, as the Answers in Genesis ministry has repositioned from being just a creation/evolution [<http://answersingenesis.org/evolution/>] ministry to a biblical authority one.

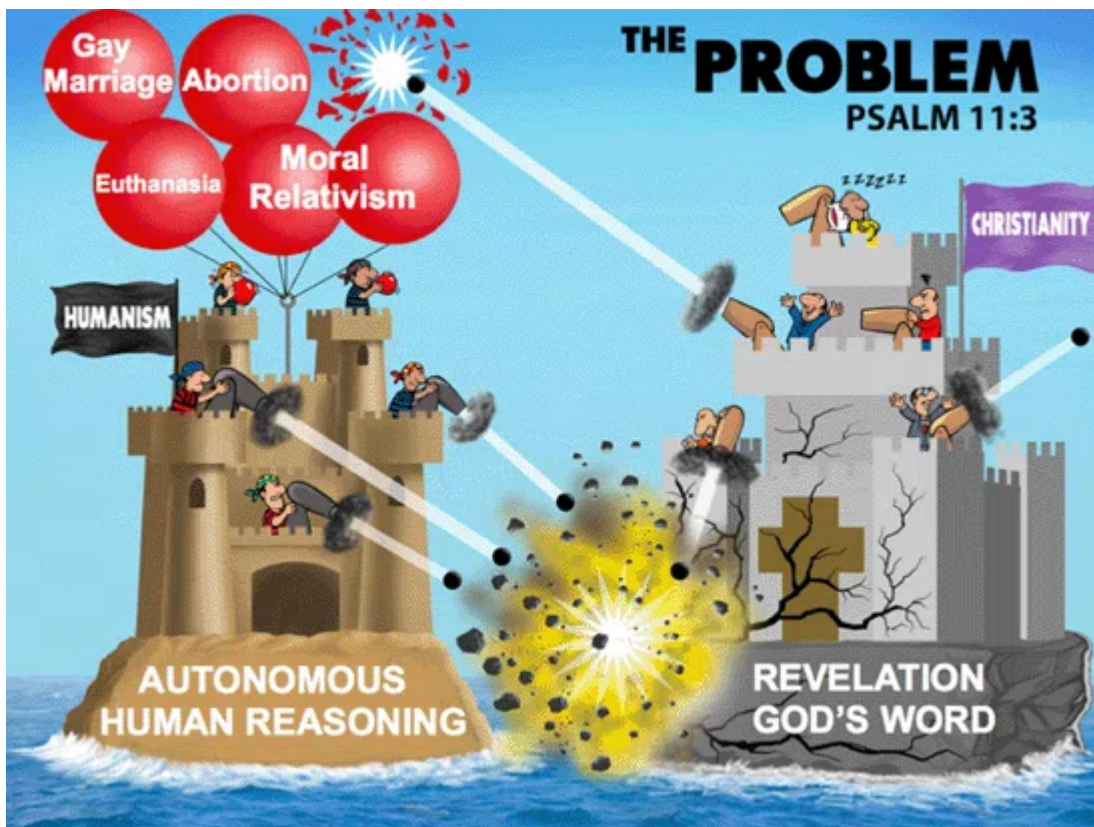
You can see this shift in graphic form (see below). In 1986 I was filmed at a church near Phoenix presenting a message on “The Relevance of Creation” (converted into a movie entitled *The Genesis Solution*). During that presentation I used the castle diagrams that have become an icon of the Answers in Genesis ministry. A screenshot from that movie shows two castles attacking each other, with these words at the bottom of each castle: “Evolution” and “Creation.”



1986: An Early Castle Illustration



1987-2008: Modified Castle Illustration



2010: Current Castle Illustration

If you look at the bottom of the castle diagram I use today, you will read “Autonomous Human Reasoning” and “Revelation—**God** [<http://answersingenesis.org/god/>]’s Word.”

So why the change? I believe biblical creation ministry has made a vital shift in its thrust, which reflects a greater understanding of the real issue confronting our world. Biblical creation ministry now communicates in a way that reflects the true nature of the underlying battle concerning creation, evolution, and millions of years.

“Man Decides Truth” or “God’s Word Is Truth”

Before explaining the recent change in detail, consider another version of the castle diagrams that we have been using up until relatively recently. Note the words at the bottom of the castles:

“Evolution/Millions of Years—Man Decides Truth” and “Creation/Thousands of Years—God’s Word Is Truth.”

This diagram reflects the introduction of the change that has led to the emphasis that we bring today through these illustrations.

When I began teaching in public school in Australia in 1975, during one of my first science lessons I vividly remember a student asking, “Mr. Ham, how can you be a **Christian** [<http://answersingenesis.org/christian/>] and believe in the **Bible** [<http://answersingenesis.org/bible/>] when we know it is not true?”

I then asked the student why he would say that, and he replied, “Well, the Bible talks about **Adam and Eve** [<http://answersingenesis.org/adam-and-eve/>], but we know that is not true because our textbooks show us that we evolved from apes.”

Right then I realized that the teaching of evolution was a big stumbling block preventing those students from being receptive to the **gospel** [<http://answersingenesis.org/gospel/>] of **Jesus**

[<http://answersingenesis.org/jesus/>] Christ. So I began to develop ways of teaching about the creation/evolution issue.

Around the same time, I was invited to speak in some local **churches**

[<http://answersingenesis.org/church/>] and Bible studies. I was shocked to find that most people (including most pastors and church leaders) either believed in evolution and/or millions of years, or didn't think it mattered what a person believed about the book of Genesis.

As I developed my presentations and the illustrations that went with them, I often used the castle diagrams with creation and evolution as the foundation blocks. However, over time, I recognized that many people really didn't understand something that I thought these foundational blocks clearly implied—that by "creation" I meant the revelation of God's Word and in particular the account of origins given in Scripture, and by "evolution" I meant that man determines truth, including the belief of origins developed by human reasoning.

Over time, I began to emphasize that believing in the creation account in Genesis means accepting God's Word as the ultimate authority, and believing in the secular idea of evolution is to accept man's word as the ultimate authority.

The Real Issues

As we mature as Christians, our spiritual discernment and understanding also matures. I am sure that is just one of the reasons why, even though I prayed for God to raise up the Creation Museum thirty years ago, He delayed the answer. The Lord knew we needed a lot of maturing in the message before He could open this great teaching center near Cincinnati that is reaching people around the world.

When I make presentations now, not only do I talk about the problems with evolution/millions of years and how this undermines the authority of the Word of God, I also do two other things:

Genesis is the basis of all doctrine, including the gospel. First, I teach about the foundational importance of the book of Genesis—that the history in Genesis 1–11 is foundational to all Christian doctrine, including the gospel itself. I do this to remind Christians that they can't defend any doctrines unless they first believe that Genesis 1–11 is literal history (as Jesus did, for instance, in defending marriage by quoting Genesis in **Matthew 19:4–7**).

Reinterpreting Genesis undermines the Word of God itself. However, there is another vital aspect that needs to be understood. This is vital for Christians to understand, and the biblical creation movement needs to be shouting this message “from the rooftops.”

That is, when Christians reinterpret the days of creation to fit with millions of years, reinterpret **Genesis 1:1** to fit with the **big bang** [<http://answersingenesis.org/big-bang/>], or adopt other positions that add Darwinian evolution to the Bible, they are undermining the very Word of God itself. And this is the issue—this is why we have lost biblical authority from the culture.

We know that Jesus rose from the dead because we take God's Word as it is written.

As I remind Christians, we know that Jesus rose from the dead because we take God's Word as it is written. Secular scientists have never shown that a dead body can be raised to life, but we don't reinterpret the resurrection as a nonliteral event. We take God's Word as written.

Yet in Genesis, so many Christians (including most Christian leaders) accept secular scientists' old-earth ideas and reinterpret the creation account. In doing so they have unlocked a door—the door to undermining biblical authority. Subsequent generations usually push that door open further. This is what has happened across Europe and the United Kingdom, and it is happening across America.

For those involved in ministry of any kind, can I challenge you to recognize a crucial, modern application of **Psalm 11:3**, “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” Applied to where we are today, the foundational issues are not ultimately creation and evolution, but God’s Word versus autonomous human reasoning. This is the same battle that began in **Genesis 3:1** when the serpent said to the woman, “Has God indeed said . . . ?”

That sums up what the creation/evolution battle is all about—it’s all about authority—God’s infallible Word or autonomous man’s fallible word!

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