

Is there a bottom?



Various ancient cultures held very interesting mythologies. “Wise men” would sit around and contemplate deep subjects such as the origin of the universe and other interesting questions. One such question involved the Earth and its place in the Solar System. In a certain commonsensical way, everything we observe around us seems to be sitting on or is supported by something else. Many ancients wondered what was supporting the Earth itself. The Earth, in a sense, is the ultimate “foundation” for virtually everything we directly interact with each day. The cell phone you use is supported by your hand, which is

supported by your arm, which is in turn supported by the rest of your body, which is perhaps supported by the chair you are sitting on, which is supported by the floor in whatever room you are in, which is supported by joists or concrete which is part of the house or building structure you are in, which is supported by the ground, which is part of the Earth! Talk about run-on sentences!

So, the million-dollar question is, “If all that is supported by the Earth, what is the Earth supported by?” The ancients wondered. One theory, as bizarre as it sounds, was that the Earth sits atop seven giant elephants! Really? Yes, really! But what were the elephants supported by? They were all on the back of a giant turtle or tortoise! Wow, what an imagination! Wait a minute. What was the giant turtle standing on? Well, it was on another giant turtle. OK. What was THAT giant turtle on? Hey, it’s turtles all the way down! Have you ever heard the phrase, “Turtles all the way down”? Now you have!

There’s no end—no “bottom” in a sense. It goes on forever. It’s called an infinite regress. That’s a silly idea, but you get the picture. It is not my intention to focus on the physics of the Earth, but I will mention that, once again, the Bible got it right, even before we had modern science or the likes of Isaac Newton.

He stretches out the north over the void and hangs the earth on nothing (Job 26:7).

That’s a pretty accurate description of how the Earth stays in orbit due to the gravitational pull of the sun (not sitting or hanging on anything). But that’s not even my point. Everything in this article up to now has been a bonus. Lucky you! 😊

So, here’s my point, and it should be very practical.

For every argument, there is a counterargument. Some counterarguments are extremely well-constructed. Others may be extremely weak, completely baseless, and entirely illogical. Let’s ignore the completely irrational category for now.

Let’s think through a generic discussion between a Christian and a skeptic, both of whom are considered somewhat of an expert in their field.

- Level 1: The Christian expert makes a claim you agree with, and you feel it is certainly biblically sound. You are encouraged to hear it because it supports what you already believe. It gives you additional confidence and is perhaps an argument you can use going forward in any discussion you may have with someone else.
- Level 2: The expert skeptic makes a counterclaim that, as far as you can tell, seems to negate or at least strongly call into question the initial claim made by the Christian. You're feeling a bit nervous about this because it goes against what you believe, but you are not able to see any flaws in the counterargument.
- Level 3: The Christian expert makes a counter-counterargument, claiming to show why the skeptic's counterargument is invalid, which in turn means the initial claim by the Christian is true. Now you're feeling good again.
- Level 4: The expert skeptic makes a further argument, seemingly negating the counter-counterargument made by the Christian. You're back to feeling uncomfortable again because it goes against what you believe, but once again, you are not able to see any flaws in this latest argument.

These arguments and counterarguments can sometimes go on and on. Obviously, at some point, there must be an end. It may come when it is clear to all there are no possible responses to the last claim made, or one side, while not necessarily admitting defeat, admits not having a reply but agrees to at least look into it.

Here's the critical point. For many onlookers, they may have an opinion as to which expert is correct, but they are not in a position to truly know. They most often end up simply choosing to believe the person they want to think is correct. This belief can even be in spite of how weak the arguments presented on their side may have been.

After watching a debate most people's positions are relatively unchanged. Certainly, if your representative in the debate does well, it's easy to understand why. However, it is part of (fallen) human nature that when someone's representative does not fare well, they tend to rationalize why they're still right. "Well, that wasn't really a fair debate because... [fill in the blank]."

Even the initial arguments that are presented are generally taken by the audience to be true, based on faith. You probably don't know for sure something is true, but your representative is well-researched and highly educated. And if they are a Christian, well, they certainly wouldn't lie about anything, right? (Hopefully not!) Therefore, what they say **MUST** be true. In reality, you don't really know. Then there's the counterargument, and the counter-counterargument, and so on. The longer and deeper it goes, the less certain you are of the accuracy of statements made by either side.

So, how do you determine the truth?

Question of the Month

I see three major options at this point:

1. Find the world's leading experts in every area related to the discussion at hand and trust whatever they have to say because they are the world's leading experts.
2. Become the world's leading expert in every area related to the discussion at hand and trust yourself because YOU are the world's leading expert in all those areas.
3. Continue to study God's Word and trust the Holy Spirit to guide you in whatever direction you should go.

Which of those options sounds the best?

The first option assumes that virtually everything a leading expert believes is true. Truth, however, is not determined by authority but by compelling evidence. It would also be difficult to determine who the actual leading expert is in each field since that is often hotly debated.

The second option is not realistic for any human being. Outside of Jesus, no one person has ever been the world's leading expert in numerous fields. You probably won't be the first.

That leaves the third option, which is the only realistic option and the best one anyway.

Oh, but what do you do when the topic being discussed isn't directly addressed in the Bible? Good question. As a real-life example, how about the question of how much of a factor human beings are in the current climate situation? There's nothing in Scripture that will tell you we are currently increasing CO₂ levels by 3.85% which will lead to an average global temperature increase of 1.1 °C. (I just made that up for illustrative purposes. I'm not saying that's what the current claim is.)

Here's my recommended approach. Hear out all sides as best as you can (whatever the topic is) and use your God-given discernment regarding what you have heard or read. You still probably won't be in a position to actually know "for sure for sure," but that's where being in God's Word and prayer come into play. You're not reading to find a verse that directly addresses the issue; you're reading to help better hear God's voice as He speaks to your spirit through His Spirit. He can give you peace as to what, if anything, He wants you to do or what He wants you to believe. Does that make sense?

Yes, there is a bottom... God's Word. There is no valid counterargument, contrary to what all skeptics believe. When we inevitably face our Creator, He will not be quizzing us on what all the skeptics said; He will be holding us accountable to His Word! Let's all get to know it better!

If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don't hesitate to [contact us!](#)