

## THE SCOPES TRIAL

**Directions:** *The 1925 Scopes trial pitted defense attorney Clarence Darrow against special prosecutor William Jennings Bryan. Called as a defense witness, Bryan answered a blistering volley of questions fired at him by Darrow. Read the excerpt below and answer the questions that follow.*

**Cast:**

Clarence Darrow

William Jennings Bryan

Attorney General A. Thomas Stewart

<b>DARROW:</b>	Mr. Bryan, could you tell me how old the earth is?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	No, sir; I couldn't.
<b>DARROW:</b>	Could you come anywhere near it?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	I wouldn't attempt to. I could possibly come as near as the scientists do, but I had rather be more accurate before I give a guess...
<b>DARROW:</b>	Have you any idea how far back the glacial age was?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	No, sir.
<b>DARROW:</b>	Do you know whether it was more than six thousand years ago?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	I think it was more than six thousand years.
<b>DARROW:</b>	Have you any idea how old the earth is?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	No.
<b>DARROW:</b>	The book you have introduced in evidence tells you, doesn't it? [Darrow holds up a copy of the Bible]
<b>BRYAN:</b>	I don't think it does, Mr. Darrow.
<b>DARROW:</b>	Let's see whether it does. Is this the one?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	That is the one, I think.
<b>DARROW:</b>	It says, B.C. 4004?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	That is Bishop Usher's calculation.
<b>DARROW:</b>	That is printed in the Bible you introduced?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	Yes, sir....
<b>DARROW:</b>	Would you say the earth was only four thousand years old?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	Oh, no; I think it is much older than that.
<b>DARROW:</b>	How much?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	I couldn't say
<b>DARROW:</b>	Do you say whether the Bible itself says it is older than that?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	I don't think the Bible says itself whether it is older or not [long pause]
<b>DARROW:</b>	Do you think the earth was made in six days?
<b>BRYAN:</b>	Not six days of twenty-four hours.

**DARROW:** Doesn't [the Bible] say so?

**BRYAN:** No, sir.

**STEWART:** I want to impose another objection. What is the purpose of this examination?

**BRYAN:** [pale and trembling, he rises, shaking his fists above his head] The purpose is to cast ridicule on everybody who believes in the Bible, and I am perfectly willing that the world shall know that these gentlemen have no other purpose than ridiculing every person who believes in the Bible!

**DARROW:** We have the purpose of preventing bigots and ignoramuses from controlling the education of the United States, and you know it, and that is all.

1. Why would Bryan object to Darwin's theory of evolution?
2. Explain the purpose of Darrow's cross-examination of Bryan.
3. Which side – fundamentalist (Bryan's) or the evolutionist (Darwin) – do you think prevailed? Why?



"WHAT WOULD THEIR VERDICT BE?"

—The Daily Star (Montreal).