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COMPELLING REASONS TO REMAIN LOYAL TO A YOUNG-EARTH INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS 1

RAZONES CONVINCENTES PARA PERMANECER LEALES A UNA
 INTERPRETACIÓN DE LA TIERRA JOVEN EN GÉNESIS 1

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Abstract

This paper will argue that believers who adhere to a more literal interpretation of Genesis 1-3 and, by proxy, affirm a young-earth creation, are not only within their right to do so, but are epistemically sound in making this choice given the superiority of a robust interpretation of special revelation over and above data collected from general revelation delineated in a largely naturalistic worldview. To this end, this work will juxtapose the following: the nature of special revelation and general revelation (a theological consideration), the consistency witnessed in the hermeneutical enterprise and the variety observed in the conclusions/allowances witnessed in the scientific community (a methodological consideration), and the pre-modern acceptance of theology in the academia with the 19-20th century's under-appreciation of theology's role (a historic consideration). In each of these discussions, the latter concept/idea will be exposed as inferior to, or at least suspect in light of the former option. This paper assumes that the reader has adopted the Christian worldview. In other words, the aim of this work is not to convince the atheist naturalist of the Christian worldview on creation. Instead, this work hopes to explain why young-earth Christians are justified in holding this view and seeks to call Christians who adopt an old-earth view to reevaluate their position. If successful, young-earth creationists will be encouraged to hold fast to their interpretation of Genesis 1-3 in spite of being pressured to do otherwise.

Resumen

Este artículo analizará que los creyentes que adhieren a una interpretación más literal de Génesis 1-3 y, de manera indirecta, ratifican el creacionismo de la Tierra joven, no solo tienen derecho a esa creencia sino que son epistémicamente sólidos al hacer esta elección dada la superioridad de una consistente interpretación de la revelación especial más allá de los datos recogidos de la revelación general que se describen en una cosmovisión en gran medida naturalista. Con este fin, este trabajo yuxtapone lo siguiente: la naturaleza de la revelación especial y de la revelación general (una consideración teológica), la coherencia que se observa en el enfoque hermenéutico y la variedad que se observa en las conclusiones / los créditos de la comunidad científica (una consideración metodológica), como así también la aceptación premoderna de la teología en el mundo académico con la subvaloración del papel del teólogo en período del siglo XIX-XX (una consideración histórica). En cada una de estas discusiones, este último concepto / idea será expuesto como inferior a, o por lo menos sospechoso a la luz de la opción anterior. Este trabajo presupone que el lector ha adoptado la cosmovisión cristiana de la creación. En otras palabras, el objetivo no es convencer al naturalista ateo de la cosmovisión cristiana de la creación. En cambio, el trabajo espera explicar por qué los cristianos de la Tierra joven están justificados en mantener esta visión y trata de convocar a los cristianos que adoptan una visión de la Tierra antigua para que reevalúen su posición. Si lo logra, los creacionistas de la Tierra joven serán alentados a aferrarse a su interpretación de Génesis 1-3 a pesar de la presión para que no lo hagan.

Keywords

Religion, science, creation, young-earth, old-earth, special revelation, general revelation, intelligent design, evolution, Darwinism, hermeneutics, natural sciences, theology. Ciencia, creación, tierra joven, tierra vieja, revelación especial, revelación general, diseño inteligente, evolución, darwinismo, hermenéutica, ciencia natural, teología

Many in the Christian community are under enormous pressure to capitulate in their views on God in general and the origins of the universe in particular because of arguments made by those in the naturalistic scientific community and its sympathizers within the church.

One example of this phenomenon is witnessed in *Coming to Peace with Science* by Darrel Falk. In his work, Falk's desire is for the church to come to peace with science and, by proxy, assimilate its interpretations of passages like Genesis 1 into what fits naturalistic theories of the universe's age (Falk, 2004). However,

Falk fails at convincing the educated believer that his solution is tenable because of unfortunate missteps in his hermeneutics, underwhelming rejoinders to alternative viewpoints, and undeveloped discussions concerning pertinent matters.

He also fails at impressing the naturalist by slipping into what atheist scientists hate most (something akin to resorting to the "God of the gaps").

Though this book intended to build a bridge between two competing worldviews, one wonders if Falk does not polarize those in their respective camps even further away from each other, disappointing Christians with sloppy exegesis and offending naturalists by sprinkling God on top of their unguided evolutionary system.

It would appear that the question plaguing the church and the academy today is one of authority. Does our interpretation of the Bible need to come to peace with science or does science need to come to terms with the Bible? Truly, both can work together and each can inform the

other, but not in equal ways. For instance, anyone who is more committed to the Bible than they are to interpretations of scientific findings is not going to be convinced by Falk's work (or others) to trade a robust interpretation of Genesis 1-3 for a highly metaphorical one in an effort to accommodate millions/billions of years (an old-earth view). And these should not believe they are compelled to do so.

This paper will argue that believers who adhere to a more literal interpretation of Genesis 1-3 and, by proxy, affirm a young-earth creation, are not only within their right to do so, but are epistemically sound in making this choice given the superiority of a robust interpretation of special revelation over and above data collected from general revelation delineated in a largely naturalistic worldview.

To this end, this work will juxtapose the following: the nature of special revelation and general revelation (a theological consideration), the consistency witnessed in the hermeneutical enterprise and the variety observed in the conclusions/allowances witnessed in the scientific community (a methodological consideration), and the pre-modern acceptance of theology in the academia with the 19-20th century's under-appreciation of theology's role (a historic consideration).

In each of these discussions, the latter concept/idea will be exposed as inferior to, or at least suspect in light of the former option. This paper assumes that the reader has adopted the Christian worldview.

In other words, the aim of this work is not to convince the atheist naturalist of the Christian worldview on creation. Instead, this work hopes to explain why young-earth Christians are justified in holding this view and seeks to call Christians who adopt an old-earth view to reevaluate their position. If successful, young-earth creationists will be

encouraged to hold fast to their interpretation of Genesis 1-3 in spite of being pressured to do otherwise.

Special Vs. General Revelation

The majority of Christians concede that God reveals himself through both special and general revelation. However, a robust understanding of these terms almost requires that one prioritize the former over the latter. Unfortunately, many under the pressure mentioned earlier, have become tempted to allow general revelation to usurp special revelation's place. This is unfortunate, especially as it pertains to role the Scriptures play in one's worldview.

Some, borrowing from principles found in 2 Peter 1:20-21 and 2 Timothy 3:16 argue the following,

“The Bible claims to be a book from God, a message with divine authority. Indeed, the biblical writers say they were moved by the Holy Spirit to utter His very words—that their message came by revelation so that what they wrote was breathed out (inspired) by God Himself” (Geisler, 2002; 1 Sam. 23:2; Isa. 59:12; Zech. 7:12; 1 Cor. 2:13; 14:37; Gal. 1:12; Rev. 1:1; 22:9).

To assign these qualities to the Bible is to be utterly consistent with what the Scriptures say about itself. In the Old Testament, the writers often claim to be speaking on God's behalf with phrases like “Thus says the Lord,” “the Word of God came to me,” and “The Lord of God spoke unto...” (Isa. 1:11, 18; Jer. 2:3, 5; 34:1; Eze. 30:1; Lev. 1:1; 4:1; 5:14; 6:1, 8, 19; 7:22). Also, in the New Testament, the Bible argues that it is the

“Word of God” (Matt. 15:6; Rom. 3:2; 1 Pet. 1:23; Heb. 4:12). Therefore, the definition given above is, at the very least, in keeping with biblical claims. However, in order to avoid gross circularity on this point, one must investigate the evidences for the Bible’s uniqueness (compared to other ancient/spiritual works of literature).

Thankfully, historical-grammatical analyses provide plenty of positive evidences for the superiority of special revelation as preserved in the Scriptures. For instance, the Bible is utterly consistent in all of its doctrines (in spite of it being written over a 1500 year span by over 40 different authors). Concerning the myriad of manuscripts that have been preserved/discovered

(both original and early) Neil Lightfoot states,

“A large number of variations do exist in the manuscripts, but this number is ascertained by counting all the variants in all the manuscripts...Most variations are made up of minute details, either obvious scribal blunders or slight changes in spelling, grammar, and word-order. These are of no consequence to our text...A few variations present problems for our text, but all of them are not impossible to solve” (Lightfoot, 1963).

A few of these “variations” and their corresponding answers are worth mentioning. One of the more popular problems that skeptics believe undermine the legitimacy of the Bible includes the variations within the genealogies. However, even these discrepancies are not without an explanation.

For instance, Gary Rendsburg’s solution to this particular issue is capable of not only satisfying what is known of the origins of the people of Israel, but also what is true of the Scriptures themselves (Rendsburg,

1990). A more general complaint lodged by skeptics involves the question of how the God of the Old Testament compares to the God of the New Testament. Many believe that there are different ways in which the Divine relates to his people in different times (Barzun, 2000; Meier, 1990; Rizzuto, 1979). However, even those within the psychiatric community have been able to observe—through various means of psychoanalysis applied to the biblical narratives—the similar ways in which God interacted with his people in both testaments (Popp, 2003).

These two issues—the first particular and the second more general—illustrate that special revelation is utterly consistent in spite of perceived discrepancies.

A second point in favor of the uniqueness of special revelation, especially as it pertains to its status as an ancient document, incorporates the number of manuscripts available to test the contents therein. Lightfoot suggests that a conservative estimate of the textual documents that evidence the contents of Scripture, including manuscripts and versions, surpasses 20,000 (Lightfoot, 1963).

Compare this to the History of Thucydides which was written around 400B.C.—a work that has been passed down on the basis of 8 manuscripts—or the few writings left of the Roman historian Tacitus (c. 100A.D.)—a series of works that has survived on the margin of two manuscripts. Perhaps this is why Sir Frederic Kenyon was compelled to say the following:

“The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the Church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one of other

of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world” (Kenyon, 1958).

No doubt this, alongside archaeological and historical evidences, is why so many even in the liberal community have a difficult problem arguing against certain biblical claims (Ehrman, 2012).

That the Bible is utterly consistent, thoroughly evidenced, and complimentary to historical analysis should not come as a surprise given what it says about itself—namely, that it is sourced in God. “If God cannot err, and the original text was breathed out by God, then it follows that the original text is without error” (Geisler, 2002).

This is why Augustine cautions Bible students thusly: “If we are perplexed by any contradiction in Scripture, it is not allowable to say, ‘The author of this book is mistaken’; but either the manuscript is faulty, or the translation is wrong, or you have not understood.”

These considerations lend a great deal of credibility to special revelation. The Bible self-identifies as being sourced in the Divine, proves itself to be thoroughly consistent, has been checked against a mountain of manuscripts, and is not threatened against rigorous historical analysis.

General revelation—defined as that which can be known of God in nature, history, and humanity—is very different (Erickson, 1998). For instance, there is an pervasive limit on what can be gleaned from this medium because of the fall. For Peter Harrison, Adam’s lapse was not merely a moral loss, but one that plunged humanity into an “irremediable epistemological confusion” (Harrison, 2007). In interpreting Augustine, Harrison even argues that “our habitual reliance on the senses is a sign of our fallen condition” (Harrison, 2007). Such a preoccupation is

misguided as all of the natural order apprehended in the senses shares in the judgment on humankind (Shuster, 2004).

These considerations seem to correspond to the second law of thermodynamics which states that everything in the universe is trending towards entropy (see mutations, disease, natural phenomena, etc.).

Perhaps this is why general revelation is given less attention in the Scriptures. Though Romans 1 argues that the truth available in general revelation is enough to lead individuals into some knowledge of God—his “invisible attributes, eternal power, and divine nature” (Rom. 3:20)—ultimately, it is not clear whether or not how God’s attributes were present, how his power was applied, or how his divine nature was expressed can be known from such. In his comment on Psalm 19:1-6, Calvin writes,

“While the heavens bear witness concerning God, their testimony does not lead men so far as that thereby they learn truly to fear him, and acquire a well-grounded knowledge of him; it serves only to render them inexcusable” (Calvin, 1948).

Add to this what Paul says in Romans 8:19-20—“For the creation eagerly awaits for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility...”—and one might understand why God appears to be more concerned with his people understanding/appreciating the uniqueness of his Word over and above his creation.

From these observations, James Hoffmeier concludes that the revelation of God that is available to everyone by means of their senses (general revelation) is limited to providing veiled information about God—not what it necessary to understand intimate details about his work (Hoffmeier, 2000). Some look at a brilliant sunset and marvel at God’s

matchless creativity and grace. Others are impressed only by the angle at which the photons emanating from the sun are hitting the earth's atmosphere at a particular time of day (Calvin, 1948). What's is the difference? The first has confronted God's special revelation positively while the other is either ignorant of it or has rejected it (VanGemeren, 1991). Therefore, one might argue that unlike special revelation (which, as argued earlier, is inspired, consistent, and compelling), general revelation is incomplete and immediately limited by the fall. This first juxtaposition has yielded several worthy points of consideration.

Though mankind is fallen and his capacity to understand anything lies in jeopardy as a result of his present condition, inasmuch as special revelation is perfect in its original form and general revelation comes through the prism of that which has been stained by sin, the former provides a better starting point than the latter (Hoffmeier, 2000).

This means that the while general revelation might be used to point people to special revelation, special revelation must eventually be used to adequately comprehend general revelation. As Hoffmeier concludes, "We run the risk of creating intellectual idols, if we place general and special revelation on the same plane and think salvific knowledge can be apprehended from the inaudible message in nature rather than only from his written Word, and/or the incarnate Logos." Though Hoffmeier's deduction applies to "salvific knowledge," the same is true of particular knowledge of exactly how God has worked or does work in the created universe.

Therefore, as many of the old-earth arguments appear to be fascinated with general revelation over and above special revelation, given what has been presented thus far, the young-earth subscriber is on adequate footing in his/her prioritization of special revelation over and above general revelation.

Hermeneutics Vs. Natural Sciences

Complimentary to the juxtaposition between special and general revelation is the comparison drawn between the vehicles used to elucidate truth from each—hermeneutics and the natural sciences respectively. Understanding truth as found in special revelation is ultimately a matter of rendering the right interpretation. The shape that this enterprise takes might be compared to what is called a “hermeneutical spiral” in which the student moves “from text to context, from its original meaning to its contextualization or significance for the church today” (Osborne, 1991). Concerning this process, Osborne writes,

“I am not going round and round in a closed circle that can never detect the true meaning but am spiraling nearer and nearer to the text’s intended meaning as I refine my hypotheses and allow the text to continue to challenge and correct those alternative interpretations, then to guide my delineation of its significance for my situation today.

The sacred author’s intended meaning is the critical starting point but not an end in itself. The task of hermeneutics must begin with exegesis but is not complete until one notes the contextualization of that meaning for today” (Osborne, 1991).

In other words, the shape that biblical interpretation takes might be compared to an inverted cyclone that is zeroing in on not only the most accurate interpretation of any given passage, but also the most thoroughly nuanced application of that passage given the current context.

Though this spiral is witnessed by individuals in their own studies of pertinent passages, this phenomenon has also been witnessed more

generally in the history of biblical interpretation. Ancient readings of traditional texts were, for the most part allegorical and figurative from

150B.C.-100A.D (Yarchin, 2004). Thereafter, early Christian and Rabbinic biblical interpretations (c. 100A.D.-600A.D.) accentuated Old Testament expectations and their respective fulfillments. In essence, allegory was focused prophetically and typology was used to successfully connect the old and new testaments together as one grand story (van Buren, 1998; Young, 1994). This eventually led to a Christocentric understanding of the Scriptures and a sophisticated Rule of Faith that has remained to this day (Yarchin, 2004).

Impressed by Christ's prominence in the greater story of Scripture, ethical applications for everyday living eventually emerged (Augustin, 1996). In medieval times (c. 600A.D.-1500A.D.), Christian interpretation believed that the world and the Scriptures needed to be read together inasmuch as the words contained therein signify objects or actions in the world.

As a result, interpretations that seemed to correspond to reality were preferred. During this period, tension emerged as some wanted to make historical inquiries into the original culture and context of the Bible while others wanted the text to inform their own personal worship (O'Meara, 1981). Later, the natural sciences began to steal focus as "the task of making the physical universe intelligible was becoming less a theological and more a scientific enterprise." This birthed historical criticism and all of its daughters— some of which redacted the text down to a literary object with little to no explanatory power (Frei, 1974). Though deleterious implications followed, what was welcomed was the recognition that the historical analysis of what was written in biblical texts entails far more than linguistics (it includes but is not limited to genre, historical localization, authorship, date, audience, etc.). More recently, the question

of whether or not the text has any meaning at all has been asked and resoundingly answered (Derrida, 1973; Vanhoozer, 2009). On one end, the reader response method undermines the author and denies any objective meaning. On the other end there are canonical methods that use the hermeneutical spiral to zero in on the authorial intent and appropriate applications (Peckham, 2016).

This brief survey illustrates how the evolution of interpretation might be compared to a process revolving around four poles that each suffer a degree of tension. These four poles include the following: text and context, original meaning and application, history and language, and literal and figurative interpretation. Like polar water molecules that are constantly pulling and pushing against their individual parts (oxygen and hydrogen atoms), these historical trends in biblical interpretation pull and push against each other. In the midst of their tension, students are able to yield robust interpretations of the data collected in Special Revelation.

Each pole holds the others in check, rendering it easy for the majority of scholarship to spot interpretations that fall outside of the responsible domain that rests in the middle of these four poles.

These kinds of checks and balances are not present in the natural sciences. Historically, interpretations of that which is perceived in the natural world have varied in dramatic ways.

The position and shape of the earth, the evolution of physics, global cooling and global warming, and Darwinian evolution vs. intelligent design all demonstrate the wide-ranging and competing interpretations given at different times for similar observations.

To be sure, the tools afforded by science have added important information, allowing, in most cases, better theories and/or explanations for certain phenomena. However, this is not always the case. In fact, while

hermeneutics allows any interpretation of a passage to be checked within the domain provided, the scientific community has proven that it is not as open for debate.

This is nowhere more clearly witnessed than in the censorship of intelligent design as a viable option for or explanation of the universe's origins. Rather than being awarded a hearing in the scientific community, intelligent design has quite literally been thrown out of court before it was even given a chance to testify. An excerpt from a court ruling issued by Scott F. Aiken,

Michael Harbour, and Robert B. Talisse reads,

“We find that ID fails on three different levels, any one of which is sufficient to determine that ID is not a science. They are: (1) ID violates the centuries-old rules of science by invoking and permitting supernatural causation; (2) the argument of irreducible complexity, central to ID, employs the same flawed and illogical contrived dualism that doomed creation science in the 1980's; and (3) ID's negative attacks on evolution have been refuted by the scientific community” (Aiken, Harbour, Talisse, 2009; Demnski & Witt, 2010).

Similar statements have been made by the media and popular culture. In *Media Perspectives on Intelligent Design and Evolution*, Michael Paxton suggests that naturalistic scientists have a new accomplice in the media to promote the view that evolution is the only accepted scientific approach to the development of life (Paxton, 2013). Therein, Paxton provides a timeline of major court cases that have suppressed intelligent design alongside a chronology of media moments in the evolution/intelligent design debate that demonstrate this trend.

Whether in the court of law or in the courtroom of popular opinion, intelligent design has not been disproven, but disenfranchised. Like a political opponent with a clean record and excellent policies, intelligent design has been subject to personal character attacks that are bereft of any credible or compelling substance. Why? It would appear that the biggest fear is the inclusion of some over-arching meta-narrative (especially one of that includes the supernatural) into the “objective” and purely “observational” discipline of natural science.

However, intelligent design’s biggest critics are guilty of advancing a metanarrative of their own. Dawkins and Dennett not only represent the latest and most extreme form of Darwinism to date; these also are the loudest voices against intelligent design and young earth theories (Dawkins, 1995). Alister McGrath argues, “where most evolutionary biologists would argue that Darwinism offers a description of reality, Dawkins goes further, insisting that it is to be seen as an explanation of things” (McGrath, 2010). In other words, for Dennett in philosophy of mind studies and Dawkins in the Biological field, Darwinism has transcended theory status and has become a thoroughgoing worldview and metanarrative—its own religion.

This renders their criticism and censorship of intelligent design/young earth on ideological grounds not only underwhelming, but hypocritical.

Though, to be sure, variations exist in the conclusions reached in both the hermeneutical and scientific enterprises, hermeneutics appears to be zeroing in on better interpretations of its subject while scientific analysis is prone to diverging and even competing conclusions, unchecked or, at least, un-nuanced by any historically consistent tendencies.

While hermeneutics is willing to entertain interpretations of all kinds and render a judgment based on their coherence within a relatively

consistent domain/continuum, many in the scientific community actively suppress alternative theories because of political expediency and other less scientific reasons. While hermeneutics seeks truth and meaning and is innovating better and more complete ways to apprehend it, the scientific enterprise's quest for objectivity, especially in the natural sciences and its theories of origin, inevitably yields subjective claims.

Therefore, on a methodological level, the hermeneutical enterprise, though not without its own issues, seems to provide a better and more consistent chance at truth than do some of the naturalistic methods that seek to explain the origins of the universe. This, alongside the comparison made between special and general revelation, ought to encourage young earth creationists who prioritize the Genesis account and robust interpretations thereof.

Inclusion Vs. Exclusion of Theology in the Academy

A third reason why young-earth creationists ought to sit comfortably in their position involves the current rejection of theology in the academy. Though the natural sciences are currently taken for granted and much attention/influence/research is devoted to biology and natural history, “during the European Renaissance, many wondered what the natural sciences had to offer more elevated subjects like philosophy, theology, and the arts” (Harrison, 2010; Petrarch, 1948).

These latter considerations were deemed essential and primary in providing and interpretative framework for the world while the natural sciences were supplementary and even secondary.

This changed in the 17th-20th centuries. As modernity broke out, the natural sciences sought social legitimacy and justifications for its many endeavors all on its own—divorced from the ideological tone of

theology and philosophy. These eventually succeeded in establishing natural history in “the hierarchy of disciplines concerned with the study of nature” where it had previously been marginalized. It was in this context that Darwinism inevitably emerged—not as a brand new idea, but as one natural manifestation of many naturalist-leaning trends at explaining the world’s origins (Rupke, 2010).

After leaving theology and philosophy behind, Darwinism attributed the origin of the species to natural causes: “the adoption of evolution by natural selection necessitated a complete ideological upheaval. The ‘hand of God’ was replaced by the working of natural processes” (Mayer, 1999). In other words, the ideologies theology and philosophy endorsed were being replaced by this “anti-ideology” in the modern period.

Unfortunately, the progression posited by this naturalistic program came to a screeching halt when humanity came face-to-face with what it was capable of at the end of WWII. Skepticism ensued, and, because theology and philosophy had been largely abandoned in the academy, many were without good answers to the very real metaphysical and moral questions being asked. Over time, this birthed the postmodernity, pluralism, and relativism that is witnessed today.

However, the current context is not without its redeemable qualities. As Dennis Johnson has observed,

“At our end of the twentieth century, modernity's sanguine confidence in naturalistic science, its illusion of objectivity, and its sense of superiority over myth-benighted ‘primitive’ cultures have come under attack from postmodernism. No longer do all cutting-edge intellectuals speak blithely of objective science and its assured results. Postmodernism’s multicultural pluralism challenges modernity's claims to objective perception of truth. Admitting what modernity

conveniently ignored, postmodernism faces head-on the reality that presupposition, worldview and culture mold every human observer, influencing both what and how we perceive, the questions that we bring to experience, and the answers that we take away” (Johnson, 1998).

In other words, what postmodernity embraces that strict naturalists tries to hide is a recognition and appreciation of worldview. Therefore, it might be true that postmodernism, at least in this one area, can join forces with evangelicals and others in protest against naturalistic modernity’s control of the academy and the incomplete theories it espouses (Johnson, 1998).

In the place of these theologically absent systems and explanations are emerging hybrids that seek to incorporate both rigorous science and theological consideration. One example is found in Wolfhart Pannenberg’s anthropological studies. In his estimation “theologians will be able to defend the truth precisely of their talk about God [and what he does] only if they first respond to the atheistic critique of religion of anthropology” (Pannenberg, 1985).

In other words, the cases theologians make are only going to be as compelling as they are conversant with the sciences. Serious young-earth studies work in much the same way. Most young-earth arguments are not purely ideological or without serious scientific observation and research (Heaton, 2009; Austin 2007). In both Pannenberg’s anthropological studies and rigorous creation studies, the claims made by theologians are found to be only as convincing as they are willing to deal with and answer the scientific data. However, the same is true on the opposite end. Scientific theories and/or systems are only going to be

compelling to today's culture if they comply with worldview/ideological considerations.

As has already been discussed, Dawkins and others have erroneously overplayed their hand. What emerged as an anti-ideology (classical Darwinism) has now become an ideology all on its own, and yet, it is an ideology that is totally ill-equipped to answer some of the most important inquiries because of its disdain for ideological considerations! Therefore, one might say that Dawkins and others seeking to explain the origins of the world by means of big bangs and millions of year are missing an ideological or even a theological component necessary to complete their picture.

This missing component is something that young-earth creationists do have—the interpretative framework of God's special revelation. As Alister McGrath concludes, “The recent surge of works of atheist apologetics that make a fundamental appeal to the natural sciences clearly points to the religious ambiguity of nature, a fact that needs to be taken into account in any attempt to reconstruct a viable contemporary natural theology” (McGrath, 2010, 2008).

This “natural theology” was lost along the way in modernity and is only now being reevaluated today, in large part, because of what has been gleaned in postmodernity.

As this applies to the age of the earth—the young earth position, more than most old-earth positions, is a product of the happy marriage between theological consideration (rooted in proper interpretations of special revelation) and scientific observation.

Therefore, young-earth adherents should be confident that their understanding of the earth's origins, more than most old-earth positions is coming from a more complete framework—a framework that prioritizes

the theology and science observation—not one that emphasizes the latter to the neglect of the former (Mortenson, 2004).

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that believers who adhere to a more literal interpretation of Genesis 1-3 and, by proxy, affirm a young-earth creation, are not only within their right to do so, but are epistemically sound in making this choice given the superiority of a robust interpretation of the special revelation over and above data collected from general revelation and interpreted within a largely naturalistic worldview. The juxtapositions delineated in this paper have shown that on theological (special vs. general revelation), methodological (hermeneutics vs. natural sciences), and historic grounds (pre-modern academic acceptance of theology vs. modern denial of theology), the naturalistic old-earth interpretation of Genesis 1 is not more appealing than its young-earth counterpart. In fact, the former has its own issues in need of mending before many young-earth adherents would be willing to entertain its claims.

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