

CRITIQUE OF PROGRESSIVE CREATIONISM – Part 1

Atheistic evolution is the concept that the cosmos and life arose only by natural processes. Theistic evolution teaches that God began the evolutionary process which has since continued naturalistically. Progressive creationism is the position that God has periodically intervened in the evolutionary process.

Bernard Ramm, the most influential early proponent of progressive creationism, sought to distinguish progressive creationism from theistic evolution (Ramm, 1954, p. 76). However, these two concepts as well as the similar "day-age theory" have in common the beliefs that (1) cosmic and biological development have occurred via natural law according to evolutionary theory, with or without Divine intervention; and (2) the universe and earth are very old.

The first belief depends on the second, since without long ages the gradual accumulation of changes hypothesized for evolution would be impossible. Hugh Ross is currently the most prominent advocate of these two beliefs in Christian circles.

Ramm began the practice whereby a Christian holding evolutionary beliefs could designate himself as a creationist, provided that he believed evolutionary mechanisms had been employed by God rather than happening by blind chance. Ross continues this trend.

Ross considers himself an "old earth creationist" or an "old universe creationist." However, Ross (1994) espouses beliefs which before Ramm were considered evolutionary. Davis Young (1982), popular in academic circles, has similar views.

Like progressive creationism, the day-age theory posits that evolutionary mechanisms have acted over billions of years. In the day-age concept, each day in Genesis 1 is an "age" of time which can be quantified only by reference to secular evolutionary chronology.

Ross espouses the day-age theory (Ross, 1994, p. 153-154), but he also equates the day-age theory with progressive creationism (Ross, 1994, p. 83), and the arguments he uses are identical to the arguments supposedly buttressing progressive creationism. Since Ross' arguments allude to modern findings whereas Ramm's arguments are fifty years old and therefore dated, the balance of this paper will respond to Ross' claims.

1. ROSS CLAIMS THAT "CREATION" SHOULD INCLUDE EVOLUTIONARY LONG AGES

Ross acknowledges that "the word *creationist* implies the young-universe position," but then seeks to widen the meaning of creation with the comment that "many orthodox Christians who believe in creation (and deny Darwinism) hold different views regarding the timing of creation" (Ross, 1994, p. 36).

Ross, following Ramm, apparently would prefer that only atheists be considered evolutionists. Ross is explicit about his belief that the universe is very old: "God created as He did, for billions of years ..." (Ross, 1994, p. 68). Ross' belief in an old universe allows for its evolution over eons:

"The whole cosmos was assembled step-by-step over billions of years ..." (Ross, 1994, p. 137).

Conclusion: Following Ramm, Ross has insinuated evolutionary age concepts into the church under color of creation.

2. ROSS BELIEVES THAT GENESIS 1 DESCRIBES EVOLUTION

To set the stage for this claim, Ross claims that, "In its ordinary usage among scientists and non-scientists alike, especially among physical scientists, *evolution* simply means "change with respect to time. ... The time can be short or long. The change can be small or great and more or less gradual. The cause can be intelligent or nonintelligent" (Ross, 1994, p. 74).

Such a definition of evolution is disingenuous at best. Evolutionist Jonathan Wells has observed, "When proponents of [evolution] are responding to critics, they sometimes claim that 'evolution' means simply change over time. But this is clearly an evasion. No rational person denies the reality of change, and we did not need Charles Darwin to convince us of it. If 'evolution' meant only this, it would be utterly uncontroversial" (Wells, 2000, p. 5).

Physical scientists, including astronomers, also view evolution not just as any change, but as an upward change in complexity (Henry, 2003a, pp. 124-125). Nevertheless, building on his fallacious definition of evolution, Ross concludes, "By this definition, we could say that Genesis 1 describes evolution, for it describes change in the realm of nature ..." (Ross, 1994, p. 74).

Conclusion: Ross illegitimately re-defines evolution to force Genesis 1 into his evolutionary framework.

3. ROSS CLAIMS THAT THE AGE OF CREATION IS A TRIVIAL ISSUE

Ross makes this claim repeatedly. He claims, "The battle line has been drawn over a peripheral point -- the age of the universe and of the earth" (Ross, 1994, p. 8). The truth of this claim is belied by the fact that Ross wrote *Creation and Time*, an entire book devoted to the age issue (Ross, 1994).

Ross elsewhere says (1994, p. 11), "But misidentifying the timing of God's works in the cosmos has little bearing on [one's relationship with Christ]. Nor does it bear upon the Bible's authority. It appears ill-advised, then, to make an issue out of such a trivial doctrinal point. ... For creationists to make an issue of such a relatively trivial doctrinal point seems both impolitic and unnecessary."

History reveals that this claim is false. In Western culture, Charles Lyell in the 1830s was the first to convince a large public that the old ages of geology were plausible and real. However, Lyell's private agenda, never revealed publicly during his lifetime, was to overthrow the authority of biblical chronology (Henry, 2003b, p. 170).

Many stories could be written about the influence which a mistaken timing of creation could have on one's relationship

with Christ. One such story concerns Harvard entomologist Edward O. Wilson:

"As were many persons from Alabama, I was a born-again Christian. When I was fifteen, I entered the Southern Baptist Church with great fervor and interest in the fundamentalist religion; I left at seventeen when I got to the University of Alabama and heard about evolutionary theory" (**Wilson, 1982, p. 40**). Philosopher Huston Smith commented in the liberal *Christian Century*, a venue supporting evolution, that "Martin Ling is probably right in saying that `more cases of loss of religious faith are to be traced to the theory of evolution ... than to anything else" (**Smith, 1982, p. 755**).

In later years, Wilson was a major spokesman for the Wildlands Project. Though little publicized, the Wildlands Project is being implemented and "calls for nothing less than resettling the entire continent" (**Mann and Plummer, 1993, p. 1868**).

The journal describing this project is the most eminent science journal in this country. It goes on to describe the project in greater detail: "The Wildlands Project ... calls for a network of wilderness reserves, human buffer zones, and wildlife corridors stretching across huge tracts of land - hundreds of millions of acres, as much as half of the continent. ... On the Oregon coast, for example ... the Wildlands approach calls for 23.4% of the land to be returned to wilderness, and another 26.2% to be severely restricted in terms of human use. Most roads would be closed; some would be ripped out of the landscape. ... Similar alterations are called for in Vermont, Florida, the mid-Atlantic region, and the rest of the country" (**Mann and Plummer, 1993, p. 1868**).

A Wildlands map already existed in 1993 for the state of Florida and was depicted in this article. Further, project planners have been explicit about the paganism lurking behind the Wildlands Project, which "includes a moral and spiritual dimension in addition to a geographic one" (**Mann and Plummer, 1993, p. 1870**). Considering Wilson's influence, it is legitimate to wonder, Would the Wildlands Project exist today if evolution had not turned Wilson away from God half a century ago?

Conclusion: History reveals that the age of creation is important spiritually and culturally.

4. ROSS CLAIMS THAT TEACHING LONG AGES IS NOT HARMFUL

Ross claims, "Interpreting the Genesis creation days as tens of millions or even hundreds of millions of Earth years in no way lends support to [naturalistic] evolutionism" (**Ross, 1994, p. 80**). This claim is revealed as false by the case of Charles Lyell, who advocated long ages precisely to undercut the Bible and support evolution.

Ross further devises a motivation which he claims is the reason for the opposition of recent-creationists to long ages. This motivation is fear: "The fear expressed by many devout Christians that long creation days greases a slide into the tenets of naturalistic evolution ... or theistic evolution ... has no

scientific foundation" (**Ross, 1994, p. 80**). In other words, according to Ross, this fear is irrational. History reveals that Ross' claim is not true.

For example, in his seminal work *Studies in Genesis One*, scholar Edward J. Young defended the historicity of the first chapter of the Bible (**Young, 1964, p. 105**). However, Edward Young had long been enamored with the idea that the creation might be old.

In his otherwise excellent book, *Thy Word Is Truth* (**Young, 1957, pp. 169-170**), he said, "The long ages of geology may indeed have occurred ... We incline toward the view that the days [of creation] were periods of time longer than twenty-four hours. We do this ... upon exegetical grounds." Yet he nowhere said what these "exegetical grounds" might be.

Edward Young's son, Davis Young, has authored books such as *Christianity and the Age of the Earth* (**Young, 1982, p. 61**) advocating the non-historicity of Genesis 1 and calling for conformity with modern uniformitarian geology. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the doubts of the father became rooted in the mind of the son.

More generally, the rise of evolution has caused a decline in Christianity (**Denton, 1985, p. 66**), and has aided and abetted the rise of ecumenism and neo-paganism (**Wendte, 1911, pp. 33-34, 162, 404**), and higher criticism (**Powicke, 1955, p. 228**). In the past, evolution fostered Communism and Nazism (**Kramer, 1999, pp. x, xi, xix**), racism (**Hsu, 1987, p. 377**), and wars and political killings (**Keith, 1947, pp. 28, 230**). It continues to foster the rise of abortion and euthanasia (**Burke, 1984, p. 29**).

Naturally, the sordid legacy of evolution is not pleasant material and therefore is not often discussed. Even worse, too close a look at the legacy can topple our heroes from their pedestals. Winston Churchill is an example.

"Churchill was profoundly impressed by Darwinism. He lost whatever religious faith he may have had -- through reading Gibbon, he said -- and took a particular dislike, for some reason, to the Catholic Church, as well as Christian missions. He became, in his own words, `a materialist -- to the tips of my fingers,' and he fervently upheld the worldview that human life is a struggle for existence, with the outcome the survival of the fittest" (**Raico, 2001, pp. 325-326**). Perhaps this explains why "there *was* one constant in his life: the love of war [emphasis in original]" (**Raico, 2001, p. 325**).

Conclusion: History reveals that teaching long ages opens the door to evolutionary beliefs, resulting in spiritual and physical harm.

5. ROSS CLAIMS THAT YOM IN GENESIS 1 IS A LONG TIME PERIOD

"The Hebrew word *yom*, translated *day*, may be used (and is) in biblical Hebrew, as it is in modern English, to indicate ... a segment of time without any reference to solar days (anywhere from weeks to a year to several years to an age or epoch."

Then follow several references in which Ross claims *yom* is used non-literally (Ross, 1994, p. 46).

However, Ross' claim does not apply to the context of *yom* in Genesis 1. Dr. James Barr of Oxford University has written,

"Probably, so far as I know there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of Genesis 1 through 11 intended to convey to their readers the ideas that (a) creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience; (b) the figures contained in the Genesis genealogies provided by simple addition a chronology from the beginning of the world ..." (Barr, 1984).

A straightforward reading of Genesis 1 communicates a literal six-day sequence, a fact acknowledged by Pattle Pun, a biologist and progressive creationist at Wheaton College:

"It is apparent that the most straightforward understanding of the Genesis record ... is that God created heaven and earth in six solar days, that man was created in the sixth day, that death and chaos entered the world after the Fall of Adam and Eve, that all of the fossils were the result of the catastrophic universal deluge which spared only Noah's family and the animals therewith." (Pun, 1987, p. 14).

Does Pun believe this? Unfortunately, no, for this quotation omitted the qualifier which in Pun's view negates the obvious reading of Genesis; the obvious reading is not valid "without regard to all the hermeneutical considerations suggested by science" (Pun, 1987, p. 14).

Ross claims that, "Young-earth creationists have argued for twenty-four-hour days on the basis that *yom* when attached to an ordinal (second, third, fourth, etc.) always refers to a twenty-four-hour period. This argument can be challenged on several grounds. For one, it is true only for passages describing days of human activity rather than days of divine activity [Ross gives no documentation]. ... More important, the rules of Hebrew grammar do not require that *yom* must refer to twenty-four hours, even when attached to an ordinal" (Ross, 1994, pp. 46-47).

In the context of Genesis 1, these claims are false, and the distinction between human and divine activity is irrelevant.

Further, in the Hebrew, day one of creation is not preceded by an ordinal number; "first day" as rendered in English translations of Genesis 1:5 is literally "one day" in Hebrew. Steinmann (2002, pp. 583-584) points out that this Hebrew construction signifies that day one of creation was a literal day as we commonly understand the word "day."

Scientist John R. Howitt wrote to nine leading universities asking credentialed professors, "Do you consider [that] the Hebrew word 'Yom' (day) as used in Genesis 1 accompanied by a numeral should properly be translated (a) a day, as commonly understood, (b) an age, (c) either an age or a day without preference?"

Columbia, Harvard, London, Manitoba, McGill, Toronto, and Yale answered that in Genesis 1 *yom* is a day as commonly understood. Robert H. Pfeiffer of Harvard explicitly specified the days in Genesis 1 as twenty-four hours

long (Howitt, 1953, p. 15). Oxford and Cambridge did not respond. (We have already seen that James Barr of Oxford affirms that "day" in Genesis 1 was meant to signify twenty-four hours.)

It is no wonder, therefore, that even day-age proponent Davis Young acknowledges that "the exegetical arguments for the twenty-four-hour-day hypothesis also have support in Scripture," though he admits he is disinclined to accept "that hypothesis" (Young, 1982, p. 160).

Earlier he gives the reason for his disinclination: "Christians who believe that the Earth is very ancient are generally persuaded by scientific arguments that such is the case" (Young, 1982, p. 14). In other words, the Bible speaks clearly for itself, but "science" added to the Bible demands a different message than the one intended by God.

Another argument against literal days in Genesis 1 is the claim that the seventh day still continues. Ross claims,

"Of the first six creation days Moses wrote, 'There was evening, and there was morning -- the Xth day.' This wording indicates that each of the first six creation days had a beginning and an ending. However, no such wording is attached to the seventh creation day, neither in Genesis 1-2 nor anywhere else in the Bible. Given the parallel structure marking the creation days, this distinct change in form for the seventh day strongly suggests that this day has (or had) not ended. ... We gather that the seventh day of Genesis 1-2 represents a minimum of several thousand years and a maximum that is open ended (but finite). It seems reasonable to conclude, then, given the parallelism of the Genesis account, that the first six days may also have been long time periods" (Ross, 1994, pp. 48-49).

The "parallel structure" to which Ross alludes above is a feature of the "framework hypothesis" originating with Arie Noordtjiz in 1924 (Young, 1964, p. 44). The framework hypothesis views Genesis 1 not as a literal historical account, but as a "theology of the Sabbath" in which days 1, 2, and 3 parallel days 4, 5, and 6 (Blocher, 1984, p. 51). The seventh day therefore stands alone unlike the other days.

This conclusion does not stand when subjected to contextual analysis. Dr. Andrew Steinmann, Associate Professor of Theology and Hebrew at Concordia University, has concluded that the Hebrew construction indicates that the seventh day, and the other days of creation, were "regular solar days" (Steinmann, 2002, p. 584).

Ross further claims, "Old-earth creationists find many scriptural reasons, apart from science, for interpreting the creation days as long periods. [His first reason follows.] 1. The length of God's days. The same author of Genesis (Moses) wrote in Psalm 90:4, 'For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch [four hours] in the night.' Moses seems to state that just as God's ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:9), God's days are not our days" (Ross, 1994, p. 46).

This claim is unwarranted. The Hebrew construction of Genesis 1 disallows extension of the meaning of "day" in Psalm 90:4 to the specific context of Genesis 1.

Scholar Don Carson describes this fallacy as the "unwarranted adoption of an expanded semantic field" (Carson, 1996, p. 60), referring to the illegitimate practice of forcing all the possible meanings of a word into a context which demands a specific meaning. Ross makes this error repeatedly.

Peter's allusion to Psalm 90:4 is recorded in 2 Peter 3:8. This verse is also exploited to argue non-literal creation days. However, the context of 2 Peter 3:8 does not concern chronology, but events preceding the return of the Lord.

Conclusion: The days in Genesis 1 are literal, not figurative.

6. ROSS CLAIMS THAT LITERAL CREATION DAYS AND RECENT CREATION ARE NEW IDEAS

Ross claims that, "Many Christians have been taught that through the first seventeen centuries of the church, until the industrial revolution and the scientific age, there was general agreement on the six-twenty-four-hour-creation-days interpretation. But that is not what the literature shows" (Ross, 1994, p. 16).

Ross then discusses the views of early scholars including Philo, Josephus, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Lactantius, Victorinus of Pettau, Methodius of Olympus, Eusebius, and Ambrose, concluding that all were either neutral or in favor of long creation days and possibly long ages (Ross, 1994, pp. 16-23).

These claims are false. Day-age theorist Davis Young emphasizes repeatedly that the opposite is true:

"Until the end of the eighteenth century, Christians were virtually unanimous in the belief that the Earth was about six thousand years old according to the teaching of Scripture... In general, the church fathers regarded the days of creation as ordinary days corresponding to our existing sun-measured, solar days. ... We find absolutely no one arguing that the world is tens of thousands of years old on the grounds that the six days are used figuratively for indefinite periods of time. ... Many of the church fathers plainly regarded the six days as ordinary days. Basil explicitly spoke of the day as a twenty-four-hour period. ... It cannot be denied, in spite of frequent interpretations of Genesis 1 that departed from the rigidly literal, that the almost universal view of the Christian world until the eighteenth century was that the Earth was only a few thousand years old" (Young, 1982, pp. 13, 20, 22, 25).

In contrast, Ross concludes, "A majority of those who wrote on the subject [of the time scale of creation] rejected the concrete interpretation of the Genesis creation days as six consecutive twenty-four hour periods" (Ross, 1994, p. 24).

Apparently realizing the flimsiness of this claim, in the next sentence Ross hedges, saying, "Since so many writings of the early Christian leaders have been lost, care must be used in drawing any conclusions based on statistics" (Ross, 1994, p. 24).

Indeed, day-age theorist Don England echoes the views of bygone generations when he says, "A reading of the first few chapters of Genesis leaves one with the very definite impression that life has existed on earth for, at the most, a few thousand years" (England, 1983, p. 155). Unfortunately, he does not believe this conclusion, since it "is in conflict with the conclusions of modern science that the earth is ancient" (England, 1983, p. 155).

Ross especially looks to Augustine as a supporter of long creation days and long ages, saying, "Among all the early leaders of the Christian church, no one penned a more extensive analysis of the creation days than Augustine (AD 354-430). ... In *Confessions* Augustine notes that for the seventh day Genesis makes no mention of an evening and a morning. From this omission he deduced that God sanctified the seventh day, making it an epoch extending onward into eternity" (Ross, 1994, pp. 19, 20).

However, Augustine was a prodigious writer and in other places reached conclusions opposite to those Ross would prefer. For example, Augustine espoused twenty-four-hour days when he wrote, "Thus, the period from the creation of light to another morning was reckoned as one day. It is clear that those days began at dawn and ended, at the expiration of night, with the dawn of the next morning" (Augustine, 1959, p. 178). "Augustine also maintained that less than six thousand years had passed in the history of the world" (Young, 1982, p. 20).

What of Augustine's "contention that the seventh day of creation week still continues" (Young, 1982, p. 23)? As noted above this conclusion is wrong, but the fathers of the church were only fallible men despite their immense influence over the ideas of others. An example of Augustine's influence outside of origins studies is found in eschatology:

"During the first three centuries of the Christian era, premillennialism appears to have been the dominant eschatological interpretation. ... During the fourth century ... [t]he famous church father, Augustine, articulated [amillennialism], and it became the dominant interpretation in medieval times. His teaching was so fully accepted that at the Council of Ephesus in 431, belief in the millennium was condemned as superstitious" (Clouse, 1977, p. 9). Nevertheless, one's influence is not the measure of the truth of an idea.

Conclusion: Belief in literal creation days and recent creation is not new. The church has had these beliefs since the beginning.

7. ROSS CLAIMS THAT "RECENT CREATION" IS POOR SCHOLARSHIP

In 1642 John Lightfoot published a chronology putting creation at 3928 BC. James Ussher followed in 1650 with a chronology having 4004 BC for the date of creation. Ussher's creation date was widely accepted for the next two centuries. Ross brings three charges against Lightfoot and Ussher: "[1] Both Lightfoot

and Ussher ignored Hebrew scholarship and [2] assumed that no generations were omitted from mention in the biblical genealogies [in Genesis 5 and 11]. They also assumed, based on the wording in the *King James Version*, [3] that the numbered days of the Genesis creation account could only be six consecutive twenty-four hour periods" (Ross, 1994, p. 27).

We have seen that Hebrew scholarship confirms that the creation days were recent and literal. Thus Ross' first and third charges do not stand. The charge of missing generations is also false.

Arthur Custance was the strongest modern proponent of the gap theory, sometimes called the "ruin-reconstruction theory." The gap theory claims that an indefinite gap of time existed between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. Custance would appear to have been open to finding gaps in the Genesis genealogies, but could not:

"We are told again and again that some of these genealogies contain gaps: but what is never pointed out by those who lay the emphasis on these gaps is that they only know of the existence of these gaps because the Bible elsewhere fills them in. How otherwise could one know of them? But if they are filled in, they are not gaps at all! Thus, in the final analysis the argument is completely without foundation" (Custance, 1967, p. 3).

Further, "even if there were gaps in the genealogies, there would not necessarily be gaps in the chronologies therein recorded. The issue of chronology is not the same as that of genealogy" (Thompson, 2000, p. 249).

Jordan (1979, p. 12) elaborates: "Gaps in genealogies, however, do not prove gaps in chronologies. The known gaps all occur in non-chronological genealogies. Moreover, even if there were gaps in the genealogies of Gen. 5 and 11, this would not affect the chronological information therein recorded, for even if Enosh were the great-grandson of Seth, it would still be the case that Seth was 105 years old when Enosh was born, according to a simple reading of the text. Thus, genealogy and chronology are distinct problems with distinct characteristics. They ought not to be confused."

Ross also claims that, "Lightfoot made an adjustment to Ussher's date. He concluded that all creation took place during the week of October 18-24, 4004 BC, with the creation of Adam occurring on October 23 at 9:00 a.m., forty-fifth meridian time" (Ross, 1994, p. 26). Ross points out correctly that, "This extraordinarily precise conclusion has provoked some mirth among both Bible scholars and critics" (Ross, 1994, p. 26).

However, this story is a fabrication. It was invented by anti-creationist Andrew D. White, first president of Cornell University, in order to ridicule the Ussher chronology (Klotz, 1987, pp. 173-174).

Following up on the fabricated Lightfoot story, Ross attempts to build a case for the claim that the modern age debate is the product of silly dogmatism due to Ussher and Lightfoot. In doing so, he traces a scenario of the rise of secularism which -- unintentionally -- shows how the debate really came about as a battle between belief and unbelief (Ross, 1994, pp. 25-32).

Ross is overconfident of his claim that "science" has disproved Ussher, for some unbelieving scientists give credence to the Ussher chronology which Ross rejects. Solar expert John Eddy has stated,

"I suspect that the Sun *is* 4.5-billion years old.

However, given some new and unexpected results to the contrary, and some time for frantic recalculation and theoretical readjustment, I suspect that we could live with Bishop Ussher's value for the age of the Earth and the Sun. I don't think we have much in the way of observational evidence in astronomy to contradict that [emphasis in original]" (Kazmann, 1978, p. 18). Ussher put the date of creation at 4004 BC. Eddy is saying that nothing in solar data contradicts this. The only real conflict is between recent creation and evolutionary *beliefs*, not scientific data.

Indeed, there is really no scientific reason that the entire universe could not be viewed as young. As evolutionary cosmologist George Ellis has written:

"A modern cosmologist who was also a theologian with strict fundamentalist views could construct a universe model which began 6000 years ago in time and whose edge was at a distance of 6000 light years from the solar system. A benevolent God could easily arrange the creation of the universe . . . It would be impossible for any other scientist on the Earth to refute this world picture experimentally or observationally; all that he could do would be to disagree with the author's cosmological premises" (Ellis, 1975, p. 246).

If it is possible to view the universe as 6000 years old or so, what is keeping many scientists from doing so? Clearly, not scientific data, but only evolutionary beliefs.

Conclusion: Ussher-like dates are biblically warranted and consistent with science. The conflict between biblical chronology and "science" is really a conflict with evolutionary interpretations of scientific data.

9. ROSS BELIEVES SCIENCE TRUMPS THE BIBLE

This point has been evident in the preceding discussion. However, Ross leaves no doubts about his high regard for science relative to the Bible. For example, Ross acknowledges that a recent-creation belief is common, noting that, "Nearly half the adults in the United States believe that God created the universe within the last 10,000 years."

Without supporting documentation, Ross then continues, "What reason do they give? `The Bible says so.'" (Ross, 1994, p. 7). Before the modern era, this reason would have been sufficient to settle the age issue in the minds of believers, but not according to Ross. He asserts, "The abundant and consistent evidence [of earth's great age] from astronomy, physics, geology, and paleontology must be taken seriously. . . . Hundreds of reliable scientific tools demonstrate that the creation (all but modern man) is old [emphasis in original]" (Ross, 1994, pp. 54, 91).

Having concluded that "science" contradicts the obvious meaning of Scripture, Ross attempts to justify his high opinion of "science" by designating the "word of science" as

equal to the Word of God: "God's revelation is not limited exclusively to the Bible's words. The facts of nature may be likened to a sixty-seventh book of the Bible. ... One revelation of God's truth cannot be held as inferior or superior to another" (Ross, 1994, p. 57).

Ross goes further. He considers "science" to be another inspired or "God-breathed" book of the Bible in the same sense that Mormons believe the *Book of Mormon* to be another inspired book equal to the Bible: "The Bible more than once says God speaks through the creation [he cites Ps 19:1-4, Ps 85:11, Job 12:7-8]. ... It would follow from these and other verses that, in addition to the words of the Bible being 'God-breathed ... useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness' (2 Timothy 3:16), so also are the words of God spoken through the work of His hands. ..." (Ross, 1994, p. 57).

Ross confuses general revelation through the creation with inspiration of the Bible's words. Whether intentional or not, Ross' position is not scriptural. The scriptural position is that general revelation is inferior to the revelation of Christ in Scripture (Strong, 1907, p. 27; Thiessen, 1949, p. 33).

Conclusion: In his desire to prove the long ages of evolution, Ross teaches the heretical idea that "science" -- really evolutionary interpretations of science -- is "God-breathed" and is thereby empowered to overturn the biblical teaching on creation which was commonly accepted until the rise of modern rationalism.

Summary: Some major arguments of progressive creationism for long creation days and an old creation have been examined. They are not tenable either biblically or scientifically.

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