*Joshua**

Joshua 1:1-6 (1) Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,
(2) Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.
(3) Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.
(4) From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.
(5) There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.
(6) Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.
The book of Joshua immediately follows the Pentateuch chronologically as well as sequentially in the Bible. Some liberal scholars view Joshua and the rest of the Pentateuch as one book, called the Hexateuch, alleging that all six of the books were written and edited many centuries after the time of either Moses or Joshua, in an attempt to fabricate a history that would unify and encourage a fragmented nation. But there is no actual justification to uphold such fabrication. The archaeological and chronological evidence are still somewhat ambiguous in our enlightened age and some say, the fallen walls of Jericho's timeline do not match the results of dating techniques used by certain scientist. It should be noted that "although the idea of radiocarbon dating, for instance, has been publicized as an effective evolutionary dating method for many years", however both evolutionists

*and creationists stand in agreement that this dating method, which can be used only to **date organic samples that once were living**, is totally ineffective," (Apologetics Press).*
However, archeology is helpful in biblical studies, often confirming and illuminating biblical texts. Altho we must be aware of its limitations, and deficiencies. The dating methods employed (e.g., radiocarbon, pottery, and others) are imperfect, and are always based upon certain assumptions. Further, we should be aware of the current anti-biblical trend among many archaeologists. As with any scientific discipline, we need not sift God's Word through the sieve of 'science falsely so called.' Archaeological interpretations are in a constant state of flux and often wither as grass, but God's Word abides forever.
Excavations at Jericho, the first fortified city conquered by the Israelites, is at the heart of a scientific controversy. John Garstang was the first to employ modern pottery chronology to explore this biblical site. He uncovered a residential area in the southeast slope of the tell, which he called "City IV." This city had been destroyed by a violent conflagration. Based on pottery in the destruction debris, and other artifacts in the nearby cemetery, he associated City IV with the first city Israel defeated in the conquest. Garstang dated this destruction level to the late 15th or early 14th century B.C., and he believed that the invading Israelites caused the destruction, in harmony with the biblical record.
Kathleen Kenyon critiqued Garstang's work in 1951, and did additional excavation at this site during 1952-1958. Kenyon disagreed with Garstang's date of the destruction level, and placed it at 1550 B.C., many years before the biblical date of the conquest. She further contended that in 1400 B.C. there was no fortified city for Joshua's army to conquer, and that the archaeological evidence does not agree with the biblical description of a large-scale military incursion contemporary with the destruction of Jericho (Kenyon, 1957b, p. 259).

*Kenyon based her conclusions largely upon the **absence** of pottery typically used around 1400 B.C. Subsequently, scholars have critiqued Kenyon's work and have vindicated the conclusions of Garstang.*
But herein lies the truth of the matter. John Garstang based his judgment on the observable facts that were available, pottery and other artifacts. Kenyon based her judgment on the absence of observable facts. Now really, which do you chose to believe?
The name "Joshua" is similar to the name "Jesus," both meaning "Jehovah is Saviour." Joshua, of course, was the successor of Moses, leading the children of Israel across the Jordan to conquer and inhabit the promised land of Canaan. There is little realistic question that Joshua himself wrote the book, except for the account of his own death and certain explanatory editorial comments that were added later. In the final chapter it is affirmed by Joshua that he wrote the words of the book and added them to the books of the law of Moses. Whom do7 you choose to believe, turn with me to;
Joshua 24:22-26 (22) And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.
(23) Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.
(24) And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.
(25) So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.
(26) And **Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God**, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.
Both the internal evidence and uniform tradition agree that Joshua is the author. The account of Joshua records two of the most remarkable miracles in the book, appropriately signaling

God's determination to fulfill His ancient promise to Abraham in giving the land of Canaan to his seed.
(1st miracle) *The heavy walls of Jericho at the entrance to this promised land fell down flat in response to the trumpets of the priests and the shout of the people. Turn with me to;*
Joshua 6:15-20 (15) And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.
(16) And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.
(17) And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.
(18) And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.
(19) But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.
(20) So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.
An omnipotent God could have helped in any way He chose. Who is measly man to say, that the God of the Universe does not have the power to stop the Earth, Moon, and Sun, and still maintain every other semblance of order? By definition, God is beyond the scope of such criticism. But why ,then, does God continue to let man off the hook for these atrocities made

against Him? Well, it's because God is long-suffering to mankind, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
(2nd miracle) *The sun itself "stood still in the midst of heaven" to enable Joshua's army to rout the Amorites, turn to;*
Joshua 10:12-14 (12) Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.
(13) And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.
(14) And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.
I suppose, because of doubt, there will always be those who will ask, how can I believe the Bible is reliable when it says the Sun "stood still" at the request of Joshua? Critics insist that such an event is impossible, and thereby challenge the accuracy of the Scriptures. Their God is a universe that happened by chance and time, for which there is no evidence. They challenge the word, that the universe was created by an omnipotent God. They change the truth of God into a lie, and worship and serve the creation more than the Creator.
Of course Atheists, agnostics and unbelievers do not accept the biblical version that the sun stood still for about a day. But for believers, this is just another miracle performed by an omnipotent God. The Bible does not recant God's miracles. For instance Genesis records, "and God said let there be light and there was light." Luke records the virgin birth of Christ. These things are impossible with man, but not with God. If one believes the quote found in the very first verse in the Bible, "in the beginning God", *he/she will have no problem believing God made the Sun stand still.*

"Out with doubt," I believe God created the universe. I believe God spoke light into being. I believe God made the Sun to stand still. I believe in the virgin birth of Christ. And I believe in His Word, not happenstance or imagination. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: (Romans 1:20). *So, while it is true I have not seen specific miracles that were performed by our God, there are some I have seen. I see the earth enveloped in green grass, trees and all kinds of living things. Grasses producing edible grains as food for man. Trees producing edible fruits or nuts for man to consume for nourishment. I see a new born baby brought forth into the world. And the list goes on and on. But man has become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts have become darkened, professing themselves to be wise, they have became unwise, unlearned, and never able to come unto the the knowledge of the truth.* But as many as received him, to them gave he **power to become the sons of God**, even to them that believe on his name: (John 1:12. *But perhaps the most famous and most quoted passage from Joshua is his profound allegiance to God, listen to this;* And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (Joshua 24:15). *There have been countless deserving sermons based upon this scripture, and each Lord's day an invitation is extended for the purpose of allowing one to make a choice, to serve the Lord or to serve ones own desires. Joshua impacted a whole generation for the Lord and continues to stand as a compelling example of a person who served God courageously. We feel kind of puny next to a man of his spiritual caliber. But we must remember that we cannot all be a Joshua, or an Apostle. God has placed in*

the Church as He desires. It's up to each individual to fulfill a role in the Church according to ones God given ability. Do your best to pattern your life after the example of Joshua in this respect, 'we will serve the Lord.' *There is no room for sticking ones head into the sand if we look to God for instruction, turn with me to;*
1Corinthians 12:28-30 (28) And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.
(29) Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?
(30) Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?
It helps to remember that Joshua's God is the same today as He was back then. We aren't called to wage war with the Canaanites, but we still face powerful enemies. The strongholds of evil and injustice seem as invincible as Jericho's walls. And the weapons we use today must seem as foolish to the world as the weapons God commanded to bring down the walls of Jericho. Turn with me to;
1Corinthians 1:18-20 (18) For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.
(19) For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.
(20) Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?
The book of Joshua is an action packed literary work that will rival any action packed film coming out of Hollywood. One huge difference is, the book of Joshua is a true account of God's people. The book is an account of the conquest of the land of Canaan drawn from the battle diaries of Israel's five star general, Joshua. Within a few pages, spies are hidden

and narrowly escape with their lives, the waters of Jordan are pushed back, celestial beings appear, the walls of a city fall without a battering ram or any known military weapon, treachery is exposed, a great general stirs his armies to battle, and the Sun stands still. Move over Steven Spielberg!! The Bible is the best seller.

Pryor to Mosaic law succession, the Jewish people lived by faith in the Mosaic law. After succession God's people became known as Christian's and now live by faith in Christ. So what is one to do?? Do this, live by faith that cometh by hearing the word of God, and if one will emulate Joshua, then be a doer of the word. Surly there is at least one thing a Christian can do. Most Christian duties are easy and are not regulated to either male or female, tho some are. Let's review a few that most anyone is capable of doing.

*How about **exhortation**: its a speech or written passage intended to persuade, inspire, or encourage someone. You can do this.*

*How about **love**: its the regard of friends for each other, a fondness for others that is enduring, an enduring loyalty to another person, friendship, a deep and enduring emotional regard, as Christians, preferring one another. You can do this.*

*How about **giving**: We are blessed in this country and there are ways to give alms other than laying by on the first day of the week, example, one can give to the South America ministry (Otto Alvarez) or the African ministry (Ellis Forsman), who knows, your few dollars may help to save a soul. And of course there are hospital's devoted to children's health in our own country that need financial donations. You can do this.*

*How about **curse not**: cursing and using bad language are evil and with just a little effort can be overcome. Jesus in Revelation says,* "he that overcometh shall recieve a crown." *You can do this.*

*How about **overcome evil with good**: this may require more effort on ones part than some of the others, but is something*

one must do to inherit eternal life. If your enemy thirst give him drink, perhaps this is something you may not want to do. Jesus will judge, what will His judgment be? However, it must be noted here that to 'overcome evil with good' occasionally requires a different approach. Concerning anti-christ 2John 1:10 *says;* receive him not into your house, neither bid him godspeed. *Islam is anti-christ. Nonetheless overcoming evil with good is something you can do.*

I named 5 things. Pick one and then work on it with a vengeance. Work on it as tho your eternal life depends on it. Do not hide it, your eternal life may hang in the balance. The Lord has given to each according to his several ability. What will I do with the ability He gave to me?

The walls of Jericho were an obstacle, but for Joshua the walls were an opportunity. The stone which the builders disallowed is either precious or a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

Once upon a time in 'story land' a King placed a boulder that had been rejected by his builders on a roadway. He then hid himself and watched to see what his subjects would do with the huge rock. Some of the King's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by, stumbling while navigating around the stone and complaining that it was a rock of offense that had to be reported to the King, but did nothing to remove it. Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. He laid down his load and began to move the stone to the side of the road. It was an arduous task but he finally succeeded with the help of a lever he made from a post he found beside the road. As the peasant was about to pick up his load he noticed a purse where the rock had been on the roadway. Looking inside; it was full of gold coins and a note from the King indicating the reward was for the person who removed the rock. Indeed, this rock was an opportunity and precious for the peasant.

Turn with me to;

1Peter 2:6-10 (6) Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.
(7) Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,
(8) And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.
(9) But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:
(10) Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.
What do you intend to do with the stone that the builders disallowed? Are you listening to Him? Do you believe Him? Do you have faith in Christ that is the effect of belief, do you believe baptism is the effect of faith? Listen, only those who first believe the testimony of God, and by faith repent of their sins, and confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and are baptized into His death for remission of sins, have the full and explicit testimony of pardon. This is the gospel. It's invitation is open to believers in Him. Please do not wait if faith beckons you come. Or prayer requests for other reasons, in either case come while we gently persuade with song.

This message approved by
Jack Warford
a minister for Christ

Assumptions and the Age of the Earth by Michael G. Houts, Ph.D.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article was written by A.P. staff scientist Dr. Houts who holds a Ph.D. in Nuclear Engineering from MIT and serves as the Nuclear Research Manager for NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center.]

Scientific advances continue to confirm the Bible in all areas where science can be applied. Advances in life science have shown that even the simplest life is vastly more complicated than anything humans have ever made, and believing life could somehow "make itself" is more absurd than believing a space shuttle could do the same (Miller, 2013). Research related to the human genome has uncovered the incredible complexity of DNA, and the idea that random mutations followed by natural selection could somehow turn a single cell into all of the different forms of life we see around us is being further discredited each day (Sanford, 2008). In these areas (and others) it is obvious that true science is the Christian's friend, and the enemy of religions that use evolution as their foundation.

Because true science continues to discredit the Theory of Evolution, atheists have been forced to focus discussion on topics where conclusions are drawn primarily based on the assumptions that are made, and not on actual science. If an unsuspecting individual can be convinced to accept atheistic assumptions, they can then often be convinced that atheism may be true or, at least, that portions of the Bible may be false.

One example is the subject of "age." When one examines the subject, it becomes clear that all dating methods rely on assumptions that may or may not be correct. Because all dating methods ultimately rely on assumptions that cannot be empirically proven, the battle is no longer a scientific one (where the atheist or agnostic would lose), but a battle to convince individuals (and society) to accept atheistic assumptions without question. Within groups already dedicated to finding an atheistic explanation for the Universe and everything in it, the atheist has the upper hand.

Assumptions Related to Carbon Dating

An excellent example of the importance of assumptions is Carbon-14 dating. In a nutshell, if a person assumes the Bible is false, Carbon-14 dating can be used to "show" the Bible is false. If a person assumes the Bible is true, then Carbon-14 dating is shown to be consistent with the biblical account.

More specifically, an atheist will usually assume that the Earth is billions of years old, and that uniformitarianism has generally prevailed. Although minor adjustments are allowed, an atheist would also typically assume that there have been no large scale changes in the atmospheric ratio of Carbon-14 to carbon (14C/C; currently about one part per trillion) for at least the past several hundred thousand years.

From a Christian perspective, the Bible makes it clear that the Earth was created a few thousand years ago. In addition, a global flood occurred within the past 5,000 years. Uncertainties in the distribution and concentration of Carbon-14 at the end of Creation week, coupled with the potential for significant (two orders of magnitude) changes in Carbon-14 concentration caused by removal of carbon from the biosphere during the Flood, make it impossible to estimate Carbon-14 concentrations in the atmosphere much before a few centuries after the Flood. Additional uncertainties are added due to changes in the Earth's magnetic field, the Sun's magnetic field, the cosmic ray flux reaching the Earth's atmosphere, and other factors which can dramatically affect Carbon-14 production rates.

To estimate the age of a carbon containing sample, the standard equation $C = Co\ (e^{-\lambda t})$ is used, where C is the currently measured Carbon-14 (14C) concentration; Co is the 14C concentration

at the time of an organism's death (assumed); e is the base of natural logarithms (2.71828); λ is 0.6931 divided by the half-life of 14C; and t is time. Solving the equation for time (given the current 14C half-life of 5,730 years), one obtains t = ln(C/Co)/-0.000121, where "t" is the time in years since the source of the carbon in the sample died.

The importance of the assumptions that are used to date a specimen can be demonstrated as follows. Suppose a carbon containing sample is found with a Carbon-14 concentration 2% that of today. Using the typical atheistic assumptions stated above, the age would be calculated as t = ln(0.02)/-.000121 = 32,330 years. However, if biblically consistent assumptions are made, a significantly different age would be estimated. For example, if a reasonable assumption was made concerning potential effects of the Flood (for instance, that near the time of the Flood Co was 1/30th that of today), then the same measured data would yield an age of t = ln(0.02/0.0333)/-.000121 = 4,210 years.

From the same measured 14C/C ratio, one could either make atheistic assumptions and obtain a biblically inconsistent date, or make biblically consistent assumptions and obtain a biblically consistent date. The same measured data yields a non-biblical date (32,330 years) if the Bible is presupposed to be wrong (i.e., no Flood and no recent Creation) and a biblically consistent date (4,210 years) if potential effects from even a single biblical event are taken into account. In addition to the Flood, there are numerous other factors that could affect Co in artifacts created near the time of the Flood. For example, the total energy in the Earth's magnetic field has been measured to be decreasing with time (Humphreys, 1984). The Earth's magnetic field shields the Earth from cosmic rays that form Carbon-14 in the Earth's atmosphere. The stronger the magnetic field, the fewer cosmic rays enter the Earth's atmosphere, and the lower the amount of Carbon-14 produced. The stronger magnetic field of the past could thus cause carbon-dated objects (using atheistic assumptions) to have a calculated age older than reality. It is also impossible to determine how much (if any) Carbon-14 was present in the original Creation, and if Carbon-14 was present, how it was initially distributed.

From a biblical perspective, the Flood was the most recent physical event that would have had a significant effect on the ratio of 14C/C. Consequently, the effect of assumptions on samples created more than a few centuries after the Flood are greatly reduced. Once the 14C/C ratio had time to stabilize following the Flood, both biblical models and atheistic models would use the same assumption for the initial condition, i.e., that the 14C/C ratio was about the same when the sample was formed as it is today.

Biblical and secular written records generally agree, and when there are disagreements, an assumption is made as to which source to believe. For very old objects, some archeological dating methods (including pottery styles, burial layer, etc.) give biblically inconsistent dates. However, most of these methods are ultimately calibrated to Carbon-14 dating. If the Carbon-14 dates are wrong (due to incorrect assumptions applied to the initial 14C/C ratio), then the dating methods calibrated to those dates will also be wrong. Attempts have also been made to use tree ring patterns for calibration, but those are also influenced by assumptions, especially if the potential for sub-annual tree ring growth following the Flood is taken into account (Miller, 2014).

Assumptions Related to other Radiometric Dating Methods

Assumptions dominate other radiometric dating methods as well. For example, secular radiometric dating methods assume that radioactive decay rates have always been constant. In addition, assumptions are made about the initial concentration of all of the isotopes that are involved in the dating method, and assumptions are made about the addition or removal of isotopes throughout the life of the sample. If any of these assumptions is incorrect, significant errors can be introduced into the estimated age.

Major anomalies associated with radiometric dating methods can be resolved by biblically consistent models. For example, Carbon-14 is found in diamonds and coal purported to be hundreds of millions of years old. However, Carbon-14 has a half-life of 5,730 years, meaning ½ of the atoms decay (in this case beta-decay to Nitrogen-14) every 5,730 years. It was noted by the RATE group that the detectable presence of Carbon-14 in any sample indicates that its age

is less (possibly much less) than approximately 100,000 years; otherwise, the Carbon-14 would have decayed below detectable levels (DeYoung, 2005, p. 175; NOTE: RATE [Radioisotopes and the Age of the Earth] refers to an eight year research project conducted by the Institute for Creation Research). The presence of Carbon-14 in coal and diamonds strongly contradicts evolutionary theory, which claims that both coal and diamonds formed millions of years ago. The "problem" (from an evolutionist's standpoint) of Carbon-14 in coal has also been reported by Lowe (1989, 31:117-120), Giem (2001, 51:6-30), and others. Additional information related to Carbon-14 dating and anomalies is given in Batten, 2002.

Attempts to resolve the contradiction between measured Carbon-14 concentration and assumed age include postulating potential contamination of samples, errors with the equipment used to detect Carbon-14, and in-situ production of Carbon-14 from the decay of uranium or thorium mixed with the sample. Contamination and equipment error have been ruled out, and current decay rates are orders of magnitude lower than those required to make in-situ production a viable explanation (Jull, 1985, 20:676). However, if radioactive decay rates were greatly accelerated (by a factor of a billion or more) during Creation week or the Flood, then additional investigation could be warranted to determine if in-situ production of Carbon-14 could be a potential explanation for at least some of the Carbon-14 in coal and diamonds.

Other observations made by the RATE group are also consistent with periods of greatly accelerated radioactive decay during Creation week or the Flood. One of the findings of the RATE group was excess helium retention in zircons. This finding indicates that based on measured helium diffusion rates, the observed radioactive decay in zircons must have occurred within the past several thousand years. If it had taken longer, the helium generated via alpha decay would have diffused out of the zircons. The group's observation is that significant radioactive decay has occurred, and it has occurred recently (DeYoung, p. 176).

An additional finding of the RATE group is that ages estimated using parent isotopes that undergo beta decay tend to be significantly different (younger) than ages estimated using parent isotopes that undergo alpha decay. This could suggest that whatever mechanism God used to change decay rates during Creation week and around the time of the Flood had a different effect on alpha emitters than it did on beta emitters (DeYoung, p. 121). The RATE group has also performed research related to radiohalos, fission tracks in zircons, and potential mechanisms for alleviating issues (such as high heating rates) introduced by accelerated radioactive decay (pp. 174-183). Among other implications, the observations of the RATE group indicate that assumptions used in radiometric dating may be false, and that ages estimated through use of radiometric dating may be incorrect by several orders of magnitude.

In addition to recent research performed by both Christian and secular scientists alike, other lines of evidence have been known for years that are consistent with a relatively recent Creation (Humphreys, 2000). These include the rate at which galaxies "wind up" (too fast for long ages), the amount of mud on the seafloor (too little), the amount of sodium in the sea (too little), the rate at which the Earth's magnetic field is decaying (too fast), the number of stone age skeletons (too few), the development of agriculture (too recent), and numerous others. Biblically based theories also exist for interpreting what we observe in the Universe, given a relatively recent Creation (e.g., Humphreys, 1994; Thompson, 2004; Faulkner, 2013). Other biblically consistent interpretations have also been proposed (Williams and Hartnett, 2005, p. 180).

Assumptions Related to the Origin of the Universe

Assumptions related to "age" are not limited to radiometric dating methods. Perhaps some of the most egregious assumptions are associated with the "Big Bang" theory, the current attempt to develop an atheistic explanation for the origin of the Universe.

Serious contradictions between the predictions of the Big Bang theory and actual astronomical observations have been known for decades. By the mid-1970s, the evidence against the theory had become so overwhelming that "explanations" were required. "Dark matter" and "dark energy" were contrived, and initially said to make up 50% of the Universe. That number has

since grown and, at present, a total of 96% of the Universe needs to be made of dark matter and dark energy in order to preserve the Big Bang theory.

Christians and non-Christians alike readily acknowledge that dark matter and dark energy are merely hypothetical entities that, by definition, cannot be directly observed. For example, former NASA administrator Mike Griffin once asked the value of "discovering that literally 95% of the Universe consists of dark energy or dark matter, terms for things that we as yet know nothing about? But they make up 95% of our Universe" (Griffin, 2007). He went on to write that someday we may learn to harness these "new things." When asked about dark energy, physicist Michael Turner of the University of Chicago quipped: "The only thing we know about dark energy is its name" (Griffin, 2007).

While dark matter and dark energy have been given specific properties, those properties were specifically chosen to help resolve serious problems with the Big Bang. Additionally, dark matter and dark energy can be distributed throughout the Universe in any fashion desired. When observations are still contradicted, concepts such as "dark flow" and "dark light" can be invoked. Other contradictions are resolved by concepts such as "inflation," which in themselves are merely conjectures aimed at resolving other serious problems with the Big Bang.

With this approach, any set of data can be claimed to support any theory desired. All that is required is the judicious use of "fudge factors." Consider this mathematical analogy: one could predecide that 100 must be the answer to the question, "what does X + Y equal?" Values for "X" could then be sought, and no matter what values for "X" were found, a value for "Y" could be chosen to obtain the desired answer. In the analogy, "X" is actual astronomical observations, "100" would be the desired answer (support for the Big Bang theory), and "Y" is the fudge factors (dark matter, dark energy, inflation, etc.) needed to make the equation true. The actual astronomical observations ("X") become somewhat irrelevant, because no matter what data is taken, "Y" (the fudge factors) can be chosen to claim the observations support the Big Bang theory.

Circular reasoning is then invoked to pretend the approach is valid. For example, in the case of the Big Bang theory, maps showing the location of dark matter have been developed. In reality, all these maps show is the specific ways dark matter must be invoked to avoid contradictions between actual observations and the Big Bang theory.

Christians are not the only ones who have noticed the non-scientific nature of the Big Bang theory. For example, in the May 22, 2004 issue of New Scientist, an open letter to the scientific community appeared written primarily by secular scientists (cosmologystatement.org). The letter was subsequently signed by hundreds of other scientists and professors at various institutions. Two representative paragraphs from the letter are as follows.

The big bang today relies on a growing number of hypothetical entities, things that we have never observed—inflation, dark matter and dark energy are the most prominent examples. Without them, there would be a fatal contradiction between the observations made by astronomers and the predictions of the big bang theory. In no other field of physics would this continual recourse to new hypothetical objects be accepted as a way of bridging the gap between theory and observation. It would, at the least, raise serious questions about the validity of the underlying theory.

What is more, the big bang theory can boast of no quantitative predictions that have subsequently been validated by observation. The successes claimed by the theory's supporters consist of its ability to retrospectively fit observations with a steadily increasing array of adjustable parameters, just as the old Earth-centered cosmology of Ptolemy needed layer upon layer of epicycles (Lisle, 2008, p. 103, emp. added).

Although the signers of the letter were not necessarily endorsing biblically based theories, unlike atheistic theories, biblically based theories are very consistent with astronomical observations (Faulkner, 2013; Humphreys, 1994).

Adherence to Faulty Assumptions Hinders True Science

Tremendous spiritual damage is done by the promotion of atheism through the pretense of

atheistic theories being scientific. Ironically, though, the strict adherence to atheistic theories (regardless of countering evidence) also does tremendous damage to the advancement of science.

For example, for a secular theory of cosmology to be considered, it must adhere to atheistic (and non-scientific) tenets such as the "Copernican Principle," which essentially states that Earth cannot be at a special location within the Universe. That principle drives not only fundamental assumptions behind the Big Bang theory, but the means by which alternative theories can be seriously pursued.

Consider the August 2009 paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academies of Science and quoted in the popular press, including USA Today (Vergano, 2009):

Mathematicians have come up with an answer Monday for the mystery of "dark energy" tearing the universe apart at an accelerating rate. It ain't there. Blake Temple and Joel Smoller suggest that "expanding waves" from the Big Bang "are propelling the trillions of galaxies filling the universe apart…. Dark energy is an illusion if their equations are right." However, "the only problem is that for the equations to work, we must be 'literally at the center of the universe'..." says physicist Lawrence Krauss of Arizona State University in Tempe. I think this is plausible mathematics, but it doesn't seem physically relevant.

Science News publicized an analogous article from Physical Review Letters in 2008, stating:

If Earth and its environs are centered in a vast, billion-light-year-long bubble, relatively free of matter, in turn surrounded by a massive, dense shell of material, then gravity's tug would cause galaxies inside the void to hurtle toward the spherical concentration of mass, say theorists Robert Caldwell of Dartmouth College and Albert Stebbins of the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Ill. That process would mimic the action of dark energy—a local observer would be tricked into thinking that the universe's expansion is accelerating (Cowen, 2008).

The article further notes: "But that scenario violates the Copernican principle, a notion near and dear to the hearts of physicists and cosmologists, including Caldwell and Stebbins" (Cowen, 2008).

Both models eliminate the need for "Dark Energy," the fudge factor that accounts for 73% of the Universe according to the traditional Big Bang theory. However, neither model has been seriously pursued because both violate the arbitrary assumption that the Earth cannot be in a special location (i.e., the "Copernican principle"). Many cosmologists feel a special location would imply the existence of God.

But what if the Earth is in a special location? The secular models described in the Proceedings of the National Academies of Science and Physical Review Letters actually correspond quite well with the biblically consistent models proposed by Russ Humphreys and others, especially when the potential effects of gravitational time dilation are taken into account (Humphreys, 1994; Thompson, 2004). These models explain how stars that are billions of light years distant can be seen from an Earth that is less than 10,000 years old, all based on a straightforward reading of the Bible.

The assumption that radioactive decay rates have always been constant may also be hindering scientific progress. For example, scientists have discovered that changes in radioactive decay rates can be induced. The June 8, 2009 CERN Courier noted:

It is a common belief that radioactive decay rates are unchanged by external conditions, despite many examples of small shifts (particularly involving external pressure and K-capture decays) being well documented and understood. However, Fabio Cardone of the Institute per lo Studio dei Materiali Nanostrutturati in Rome and colleagues have shown a dramatic increase—by a factor of 10,000—in the decay rate of thorium-228 in water as a result of ultrasonic cavitation. Exactly what the physics is and whether or not this sort of effect can be scaled up into a technology for nuclear waste treatment remain open issues (Reucroft and Swain, 2009).

Recent observations also suggest that radioactive decay rates (typically assumed to be constant) can change due to causes that are not yet fully understood. For example, in August 2010, a team of scientists from Purdue and Stanford universities announced that the decay of

radioactive isotopes fluctuates in sync with the rotation of the Sun's core. The team has published a series of articles in Astroparticle Physics, Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research, and Space Science Reviews. Although the measured change in decay rate is small (~0.1%), the fact that change occurs at all is extremely significant. Team member Jere Jenkins noted: "[W]hat we're suggesting is that something that can't interact with anything is changing something that can't be changed" (Gardner, 2010).

When considering the effects of assumptions on the estimated age of the Earth and Universe, it can also be instructive to look at the effects of assumptions in other areas related to the debate between atheism and the Bible. For example, in 2009 Richard Dawkins wrote: "What pseudogenes are useful for is embarrassing creationists. It stretches even their creative ingenuity to make up a reason why an intelligent designer should have created a pseudogene…unless he was deliberately setting out to fool us" (Dawkins, 2009, p. 332). What if scientists had believed Dawkins, and had given up researching "pseudogenes" because those scientists decided to assume pseudogenes were simply useless evolutionary leftovers? Fortunately most scientists did not, and by 2012 extensive evidence had been uncovered that pseudogenes have functions related to encoding proteins and gene expression. There is also sequence conservation in pseudogenes. In 2012, the ongoing ENCODE project (which includes 32 laboratories from around the world) simultaneously published 30 scientific papers detailing new discoveries. Among their conclusions were that "vast parts of the human genome thought to be 'junk DNA' are really filled with millions of cellular 'switches' helping choreograph the roles genes play in human life and disease," and that nearly all DNA "has some function in cellular creation and growth" (Roop, 2012). With advancements in true science, the evolutionist's argument for assuming "junk DNA" is rapidly fading away, much as their assumption of "vestigial organs" did in the late 20th century.

Biblically consistent assumptions have been shown superior in other areas as well. Models based on those assumptions have successfully predicted the strength and behavior of planetary magnetic fields, where secular models have failed (Humphreys, 1984). Models that take into account effects from the global Flood are not only consistent with the geologic record, but do an excellent job predicting the observed extent and effects of the ice age including the ice sheets that remain today (Oard, 2005). The biblical claim that all humans are descendants of one man and one woman, and that "He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26, NASB) is fully supported by modern genetics (Purdom, 2014). The argument that "science" somehow supports racism (directly or indirectly made by Darwin, Haeckl, Hitler, et al.) has been thoroughly rebuffed (Houts, 2007).

Conclusion

It is difficult to imagine how the Bible could make it any clearer that God created the Universe in six literal days a few thousand years ago. While apparently well meaning attempts have been made to devise compromise positions, the technical and theological problems with these attempts are well documented in the literature (e.g., Lyons, 2014; Thompson, 2000; Sarfati, 2004; Miller, 2012; Mortenson, 2005).

First Peter 3:14-15 states: "But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness andreverence" (NASB, emp. added). Christians must not allow themselves to be intimidated by contemporary human wisdom. While on the surface that "wisdom" can appear convincing, closer examination has always supported the Bible.

The Bible also warns us not to distort Scripture in order to accommodate contemporary human wisdom. Second Peter 3:16 states: "as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction" (NASB).

For some it can be hard to understand how the Earth can be a few thousand years old when they have been told "science" says it is a few billion years old. Individuals in that situation

must resist the temptation to distort Scripture in order to pretend the Bible is consistent with that prevailing worldview. Although the distortion may be done with the best of intentions, its end can be disastrous. Proverbs 14:12 tells us: “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

Throughout history, Christianity has been attacked in a variety of ways. While the attack based on “age” is currently en vogue, it is becoming easier to rebut given advances in true science. Romans 3:4 remains as true today as it was in the first century: “[L]et God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, ‘that you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged’” (NASB).

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