

Book Review - Refuting Compromise
Chapter 1 – The Authority of Scripture
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To listen to a young earth creationist, there is only one way to believe in creation. His interpretation of the Bible is the correct one. This arrogant approach to creation is what causes them problems. There is no need for this “I’m right and you’re wrong” attitude.

The author attempts to paint the picture that old earth creationists, including Hugh Ross, do not uphold the authority of Scripture. This is simply not true. As an old earth believer, and a fundamental Baptist, I believe in the ultimate authority of the Scriptures. If I see something in the scientific world that disagrees with Scripture, then the Scriptures must be right. This is also the belief of Dr. Ross. If there is a disagreement, there are two possibilities. First, the scientific data is flawed, or second, our interpretation of the Scriptures is flawed.

Is it wrong to reinterpret the Scriptures because of science? No, it is not. In fact, God tells us to examine the Scriptures for ourselves. If you want to take what the young earth creationists are saying as the truth, then there is no need for you to interpret your own Bible...they will do it for you. In reality, we are all individuals, all capable of interpreting the Bible as we see fit.

Yes, Dr. Ross does imply that the creation is the 67th book of the Bible. I would not make such a statement, but he is not far from the truth. Did God create the world? Yes. Then he “wrote” the creation story for all to see. We can interpret and study His creation, and in the process, we discover many wonderful things about what He did.

Therefore the creation, which God made, must agree with the words of the Bible. As a person with a scientific background, it is plain to me that the earth is old. If there is an apparent conflict with the Bible, it is our duty to examine the Scriptures, and either discard the scientific data, or reinterpret the Scriptures. This does not mean that we re-examine and re-examine the Scriptures until they agree with science (as young earth creationists do in reverse...they re-examine science until it agrees with the Bible). There is a plain, easy interpretation of the Scriptures which allows for old-earth belief. This is what Dr. Ross did.

In the opening pages of this chapter, Dr. Sarfati quotes from several sources to affirm the ultimate authority of Scripture. This is great, as I also believe in these, as most old-earth believers do. He concludes the first section with “The Timothy Test.” It basically says that using the common language of the Bible, how would a person such as Timothy (Paul’s disciple) interpret the Bible? Yes, a simple person with little scientific knowledge (none of which was available to Timothy) would believe that Genesis is speaking of six 24-hour days. Does that mean we should ignore the evidence we have today? No. We can study the creation in much more depth than Timothy could. Consider this...

If you were to put the earth on trial, and let two lawyers argue each side, would you not give them all the available evidence? Of course you would let them examine all the

evidence. Timothy did not have that opportunity in the first century...but we do. Unfortunately, the young earth proponents want you to ignore the evidence, and go strictly on God's Word. However, since God created the earth, His creation also testifies to its own age. This is what Dr. Ross and old earth creationists do...they consider the evidence which God created, in addition to His written word...there is no crime in that, it's just good common sense.

Young earth creationists know this, so they try to show that the creation gives evidence that it is young. However, this is where they fail miserably, because it does not. This is why they are scoffed at by the scientific community, as they come up with shaky theories to show the earth is young.

Just because Timothy would view the earth is young, does not mean that we have to. Fortunately, God has given us each a free will, and we can look at the evidence and choose for ourselves what the answer is.

The 67th Book? (page 41)

Does Dr. Ross unfairly and unjustly equate the creation as the 67th book of Scripture? The young earth author gets wrapped up in this simple statement from Dr. Ross, when in fact, he is reading way too much into the statement that is not there! If you look closely at Dr. Ross' statement, he says it "may be likened" the 67th book. Dr. Ross does not believe that the general revelation of nature is infallible. He knows that science is not perfect...that is why we must study it closely to determine the facts.

What is the real reason that young earth creationists are upset by this 67th book statement? It is simply this...if you look at the evidences from nature, you would conclude, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the earth is old. Dr. Ross embraces science and its conclusions. For young earthers, acceptance of science would mean the end of their cause. Therefore, they discard nature and its conclusions, and any notion that it equates to revelation from God, because it is contrary to their point of view. In short, discarding nature is a cop-out on their part to ignore the evidence that is contrary to their cause.

Of course they will tell you that they don't ignore nature, that they look at it closely, and that it supports their cause. They claim that true science, when applied to the earth, will testify that it is only 6,000 years old. However, this is using their definition of science, which less than 0.1% of scientists believe in¹. I encourage you, as a believer, to examine the evidence independent of young earth claims. Put the earth on trial, to determine its age.

The Big Bang and Hermeneutics (page 47)

The claim here is that Ross was brainwashed with the Big Bang theory, thus he was predisposed to believe in the old age of the earth. Sarfati goes so far to say that he was "already brainwashed into the 'facts' of science like the 'big bang.'" Brainwashing happens when a cult, or some other minority faction, trains you to believe in their ideals. Sarfati is actually claiming that over 99.9 percent of all scientists are "brainwashed" into believing the wrong theory. I think he has the story backwards. It is obviously the young

earth scientists that are brainwashed, and they attempt to keep their followers in this condition as well.

Why are the young earth organizations always on the offensive, always trying to argue their point? To keep their followers true to their brainwashed lies. The old earth people (the other 99.9 percent of people) do not have to do this public education effort on a constant basis...they are not trying to brainwash anyone. Everyone is free to make up their own minds. I ask you, who appears to be brainwashed?

Magisterial vs. Ministerial (page 49)

The author goes to great lengths here to explain something that is very simple. He points out that ministerial means that scripture is the ultimate authority, and magisterial means that science/nature takes authority over scripture, and then goes on to claim that old earth creationists are magisterial in their approach to scripture. The author appeals to Article XII of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, saying that old earthers violated this article which they signed. Sarfati fails to flesh out this claim, instead leaving the reader to accept his conclusion at face value. In fact, we have no problems with this Article, and can believe in an old earth and an inerrant Bible. The statement says “We further deny that scientific hypothesis about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.” Old earth creationism does not overturn the teaching of Scripture, it is simply an alternative interpretation to young earth creationism. The scriptures about creation and the flood are still intact and inerrant.

Sarfati goes on to list many scholars who appear to have let science overturn scripture, in an apparent attempt to drill into the reader the faulty notion that old earth creationists have let science have magisterial authority over Scripture. It doesn't matter how many examples he gives...old earth creationism is still merely an alternate interpretation, not in contradiction to Scripture. Sarfati and his colleagues don't like it because it's contrary to their young earth viewpoint, and they think it's the wrong conclusion. It's not wrong, it's just different.

Scientific Discoveries (page 58)

Sarfati blasts Ross for reinterpreting Scripture based on science. Again, I go back to the idea of a trial. When new evidence surfaces about someone's guilt, the jury is obligated to consider this evidence, and “reinterpret” the person's guilt. God encourages the believer to investigate the Bible and come to their own conclusions (Acts 17:11). Since when is reinterpreting the Bible a crime? Apparently, when it contradicts with the conclusions of young earth creationism! Ross is doing exactly what he should do, “rightly handling the word of truth.”

General and Special Revelation (page 59)

This section is a hammering home of Sarfati's claim that Ross believes nature is the 67th book of the Bible. Ross understands that nature is not perfect, because it is dependent upon the scientific interpretation of humans. Just because it is interpreted by

humans does not mean we should ignore it. It merely means you have to be careful in interpreting it. There is really nothing new here, just more rhetoric to drive home his mistaken point that Ross thinks science is more important than Scripture.

Science: A Result of Creationist Theology (page 63)

Not much important here, but one interesting item is the statement about Genesis 1:28, which Sarfati says “gives us permission (and by implication even commands us) to investigate creation.” Investigating creation is exactly what Ross does. I guess if you are a young earth creationist, you are forbidden from reinterpreting creation based on your investigations...so why investigate at all?

Origin and Operation Science (page 64)

This whole section supports the “Were you there?” notion. Ross explains (and Sarfati tries to condemn him for it) that astronomers do deal in the past, and are examining the creation at a younger age. I personally like to turn this question around, and ask it of the young earthers. Sarfati, were you there? No, he wasn't. He also must rely upon the scriptures and nature, just as Ross does, which leads us back to the truth of the matter once again...old earth creationism is not wrong, it is merely an alternate interpretation of the same data.

Conclusion

Sarfati gives no credible evidences against Ross. His only argument is vile rhetoric, which to the followers of young earth creationism, is music to their ears, but to the open minded believers, and non-believers of the world, marks them as radical, brainwashed followers of a false theory. In the end, all they have to rely upon are empty words.

In reality, I personally support them in their desire to believe in a young earth. The important matter is that they have Jesus. The age of the creation is insignificant when compared to salvation. Praise the Lord that many have come to Christ through young earth ministries. May they continue to save souls for Him. However, there is no need for them to criticize fellow believers who are old earth creationists. With this book, they have sunken to new lows, and sacrificed the brotherly love they are supposed to have for fellow believers, in order to blindly follow their young earth theory that doesn't even matter when it comes to salvation. We need to continually pray for their reconciling with the rest of the church.

¹ There are 65 scientists listed on ICR's list of young earth scientists (sure, this is not a complete listing of all who are young-earthers). It is difficult to locate a complete number of scientists, so let's limit our numbers to geologists. ICR lists 12 people that are in Geology or related fields. By comparison the Geological Society of America has over 17,000 members (keep in mind that not all geologists are members, just like not all young earth geologists are listed by ICR). That equates to 12 young earth geologists and 16,988 old earth geologists, or .0007 percent. This is by no means a scientific determination, but you get the point.