

**Book Review - Refuting Compromise
Chapter 6 – The Origin of Death and
Suffering**

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When you boil the issue of old earth/young earth down to its roots, the topic of death is at the basis of young earth objections. If it were not for this, there would be no problems with old earth belief. They feel this way because they misinterpret key verses in the Bible.

Creation Was Very Good (page 195)

Yes, it was very good, even with death and suffering in the animal kingdom before Adam's fall. God's creation was "perfect." It was a perfectly functioning ecosystem, self-renewing in its ability to sustain itself. If it were going to survive, it would have to be self-renewing. The cycle of life, where an animal dies, it decays, nourishes the plants, which are eaten by the plant eaters, who are eaten by the carnivores, is a perfect circle of life. This system does not contain evil. Unfortunately, the young earth proponents equate evil with death and suffering. The two are not related. I agree with Dr. Sarfati, there was no actual evil in the finished creation.

Adam's Sin Just Brought Spiritual Death? (page 201)

Yes, it did just bring spiritual death. Contrary to Dr. Sarfati and his arguments, none of which disprove this, Adam's fall only brought the penalty of spiritual separation from God. The proof is in the account of the fall, and, more importantly, God's instruction to Adam and Eve.

Consider Genesis 3:2-4,

And the woman said unto the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." And the serpent said unto the woman, "Ye shall surely not die."

In this matter, Satan knew Eve would not die physically. How did Eve know what death was? In the perfect young-earth world, there was no death, so how was she to know what death meant? She obviously thought it meant physical death. Without experiencing death in some capacity, this threat from God would have been empty. If Eve did not know about death, she could not fear it, thus she would have no reason to obey.

Now, consider God's instruction to Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:17.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Did Adam and Eve physically die after eating the fruit? No, they did not. What changed after they ate the fruit? They lost their place of fellowship with God in the Garden of Eden. They became spiritually dead...but they did not die physically. If God's word is true, and you use a plain, straightforward interpretation of this verse, then the only way the young earth believer can interpret this verse is that Adam and Eve would have to physically die the same day they ate the fruit. Since they did not, then God must have meant spiritual death only.

The Actual Curse (page 202)

Dr. Sarfati reads something into the curse that is not there. The curse in Genesis 3:19 says,

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Yes, Adam will die, but there is no indication that this physical death is part of the curse. He will certainly sweat, and toil with the ground to raise crops so he can eat, whereas before, in the Garden, his job was light tending of the Garden. In the second part God states simple fact. If God had said, "Because of your sin, you will physically die," then it would be a clear-cut case for the curse containing physical death. As the wording is, God is merely saying he will die. We are given no indication that this death is new.

Was Immortality Part of Adam's Original State ? (page 202)

It doesn't matter. If he was immortal...great. If not...great. Has nothing to do with the previous 4.5 billion years of earth history.

What Did the Fall Change? (page 203)

Dr. Sarfati claims "To Ross, all the Fall did was to make bad things worse." Not true at all. The Fall caused spiritual death, thus the need for Jesus Christ. Does Dr. Sarfati not think separation from God is bad?

Yes, Dr. Ross has a tendency to elaborate, and try to draw things out of the Bible text that may not be there (in this respect, he is much like the young earth creationists). Sarfati proceeds to tear into Ross' explanation of work in the Garden, and submission of the creation. The work in the Garden is not important. What is important is spiritual death. The work that Adam did in the Garden pales to the significance of spiritual death and the need of everyone to have salvation in Jesus. The work in the Garden is a side issue with no importance, no matter what Ross and Sarfati claim.

Commentators on Sin-Death Causality (page 204)

Yes, it's possible to find Church Fathers who we all hold in high esteem, and who believe our particular position. The bottom line is...you have to make up your own mind, don't let some church father who has been dead for hundreds of years make it up for you (see Church Fathers, www.answersincreation.org/churchfathers.htm).

What Was Subject to Death? (page 205)

This section gives nothing new. It appeals to several past church fathers (Calvin, Wesley) to show that there was no death before sin. There is no solid scriptural evidence presented.

Vegetarian Diets in the Creation (page 206)

First, one point of contention. Sarfati appeals to Genesis 1:29-30, especially the statement "I have given every green plant for food." From this, he "adds to the Bible," saying that it teaches that vegetarianism was a worldwide phenomenon. It says no such thing...it is merely inferred from the passage. Yes, in combination with Genesis 9:3, I believe that mankind up until Noah were probably vegetarians. However, keep in mind this instruction that God gives Adam is for Adam himself and the human race...nowhere does it say that animals do not eat other animals. Without death, the ecosystem would not survive, because the food chain, which continually recycles itself through death, must have decay in order to survive. It is a perfect system, self-renewing. No decay (death), no renewing, hence imperfection.

With that said, **we must differentiate between the Garden of Eden and the Creation.** The creation event occurred from about 14.5 billion years ago, up through the creation of Adam, about 6,000-29,000 years ago. At the end of the creation, we have the Garden of Eden. Was there death and killing in the Garden of Eden? I do not believe so. Was there death and killing prior to the Garden of Eden...yes there was, the fossil evidence is unmistakable.

You may be saying, "What about your functioning ecosystem?" We also must remember that the Garden was a special place, where man and God fellowshiped together. Supernatural forces were in place here, apparently preventing the animals from following their instinct to kill and eat. Also, keep in mind this is the Garden...what is happening outside the Garden of Eden, in the other 99.99 percent of the world? Is it life as usual in the animal kingdom, with killing? We don't know. What would have happened if Adam had not sinned...suppose the human race multiplied, without sin, and outgrew the Garden? When they exited the Garden, would they then have seen death in the animal kingdom? Very interesting questions...ones that we will never know the answer to. Does it matter? No, because your salvation in Jesus is the only thing that counts. You may believe whatever you want about the creation.

In the Restoration (page 208)

This is restoration to the ideal life as depicted in the Garden of Eden, which happened after the creation. God is not restoring the world to what it was like “during” the creation.

Carnivory and Disease (page 211)

Carnivorous activity has always been a problem for the young earther. Dr. Sarfati explains it with three factors. The third is especially interesting. “God foreknew the Fall, so He programmed creatures with the information for attack and defense features, which they would need in a cursed world. This information was “switched on” at the Fall.” If you will recall, only Adam, Eve, and the serpent were cursed...not the animal kingdom. Why would they be “switched on” at this point?

Young earthers have long held that these preprogrammed genetic traits are responsible for the growing of fangs, claws, etc, after the fall. The vegetarian statement by God was in effect until after Noah, when He granted to Noah the right to eat meat. Were animals carnivorous between the Fall and the Flood?

According to the young earth model, they were not...yet young earthers claim these attack and defense structures developed after the Fall. Remember, only the serpent was cursed...the animal kingdom was not cursed. Not until Genesis 9:2, is the animal kingdom changed.

Did Adam ever eat meat? According to the young earther, the answer is no. One clue we have is in Genesis 4:4, with Abel’s offering to God,

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.

God has instructed us to give of the “first fruits” of our produce. For Abel, this was sheep, and the fat thereof (the Hebrew word is Chêleb, the richest or choice part, finest part). If Abel was giving of his produce, and he gave fat, then Adam and his family must have killed sheep. Did they kill a sheep only for the fat...it’s possible. Could they have eaten sheep? It’s also possible. But then, what about God’s instruction to Noah in Genesis 9:3?

Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

Apparently before the Flood, mankind may have been allowed to eat certain animals. After the Flood, he could choose any animal to eat. Is this true...I don’t know. It makes for something to ponder. Does it matter what you believe? Not at all.

Pathogens and Creation (page 212)

So where did disease come from? Was it introduced after the Fall? No clue is given in the Bible, so both old and young earth believers can only speculate.

Thermodynamics and the Fall (page 213)

This is one of those things with evidence which supports both old and young earth positions. Choose which you want, it doesn't matter.

Redemption (page 214)

Finally, something truly important in this book. Redemption through Christ can be supported with either a young or old earth. In this section and the ones that follow, Sarfati attempts to show that a young earth supports it more. Does this mean that young earth believers are "twice as saved" as old earthers? Again, it makes no difference whether you believe old or young.

Death of Darwin's Daughter (page 218)

Darwin used the death of his daughter Annie to fortify his loss of faith in God. This is unfortunate, but it was his choice. Equally important is that I can point to examples today of Christians, in the same situation, whose faith is strengthened by the loss of a loved one. What Darwin chose was a personal choice, and has no bearing on the creation.

The Apostasy of Charles Templeton (page 219)

Sir David Attenborough (page 221)

Carl Sagan (page 222)

I'm sure that Dr. Sarfati could come up with many more names of famous people. It would be equally easy to come up with a list of young-earthers who became old-earthers, old-earthers who became young earthers, or whatever else you want to prove. These people made a personal choice to be the way they were...evolution, old earth progressive creationism, or any other factor are not to blame for their choices. Dr. Hugh Ross, when presented with the same evidences, has chosen to follow God. So has Dr. Fuz Rana, myself, and many other old earth creationists.

Bizarre Arguments (page 222)

No problem...throw these out, they are insignificant compared to other arguments Ross makes which are valid. You can just as easily go to young earth websites and pull up "bizarre arguments" (just read my Articles section for proof).

Conclusion

There is no problem with death before the Fall and proper Biblical interpretation, all the while maintaining an inerrant Bible. Choose to believe either position...it doesn't matter. What matters is that you have salvation in Jesus Christ.