

Damaging Ramifications Far Broader than Misdating Creation

Why Resolving the Young-Earth/Old-Earth Debate is an Urgent Matter

Whenever *Young-Earth Creationism* (YEC) is challenged, a question is commonly raised as to why it is necessary to stir up a hornet nest by creating apparently “**needless**” controversy. The standard retort behind that hesitancy is that the age of the earth is not a salvation issue, and for that reason we should direct our energies instead to leading people to salvation in Jesus Christ.¹ Yet this reply effectively commits the *false dilemma* fallacy by its implication that for any assertion to be considered important at all, it must be deemed to be of *highest* importance. The fact is, however, Christians on both sides of this concern can be found who share the very same objective that *all* people might come to faith in Christ (1 Timothy 2:4). Consequently, in order that potential stumbling blocks be removed which hinder a candidate’s receptivity to the Gospel, this paper highlights certain oft-neglected consequences of YEC which not only *legitimately* repel skeptics, but also *ought* to trouble every orthodox Christian. In addition to objections that pertain to scientific² and exegetical³ factors which I address elsewhere, further equally damaging implications which logically result from YEC include the following:

1. **It contradicts Romans 1:18-20.** In order to maintain their position on creation, YECs must deny overwhelming scientific data from nature, entirely independent from evolutionary arguments, which show that it to the contrary is ancient.⁴ It controverts both Scripture’s prohibition of suppressing nature’s testimony and the scientific method (follow the evidence where it leads). Although YECs appeal to individual *disjointed* facts that just happen to fit their claim, the aspect of *selectivity* in their doing so nullifies the potency of nature to convict sinners of their folly in denying God (cf. Rom. 1:20/3:19). For on what grounds can people be liable to God’s wrath for rejecting Him as the Creator if, as YECs claim, nature’s testimony cannot be fully trusted?

Indeed **LCMS** theologian Joel Okamoto concedes this point by describing the caustic effect of nihilism on contemporary Christianity as follows: Believers may “*have reasons for their own believing, but not for [others] believing.* [Yet such “reasons” have] **nothing to do with truth.** *When there is nothing beyond the will to believe, their religion...devalues itself.*”⁵

2. **It is anti-scientific.** Since YEC insists that scientific claims gain their approval by aligning its data with YEC dogma, it undermines the legitimate purview of science to interpret nature’s *history*⁶ by *empirical*⁷ means, despite the fact that **Romans 1 endorses nature’s testimony as truthful.**⁸

Hugh Ross lists the scientific data that must be rejected under YEC principles: “*According to [YEC] leaders, the star formation that astronomers claim to see is **not really happening** since [as*

¹ Whether or not YEC is a salvation-matter depends on the context. It has no relevance as to one’s standing in the grace of God in Christ. On the other hand, insisting that seekers embrace YEC in order to receive Christ throws an illegitimate stumbling block onto that very path (2 Cor. 6:3).

² See both of my essays, “Was the Big Bang the Big Beginning?” ** and “The Prints are Everywhere,” which, together with all of my writings, can be accessed at my website: www.christianityontheoffense.com.

³ *Exegesis* is the task of interpreting the text of Scripture correctly in terms of its genre and context, grammar, and vocabulary. See especially my paper, “The Biblical Demand to Take Another Look: Ten Exegetical Reasons the Creation Days of Genesis 1 are Non-24-Hour.” Op.cit (2).

⁴ See my paper, “Does the Bible Permit Denigrating Science in order to Maintain our Faith?” Op.cit. (2).

⁵ J. Okamoto. “When Salt Loses its Saltiness: Nihilism and the Contemporary Church.” *Concordia Journal*. (Fall 2018), p. 39, (boldface mine).

⁶ My point isn’t that YEC rejects *every* scientific fact, but that it disallows every single scientific conclusion that conflicts with YEC. In other words, YEC embraces *operations* science (that is current operations within nature) while it rejects the *historical* sciences. See Op.cit. (4).

⁷ *Empirical* knowledge is attained by direct investigation of objects and events that are accessible to our five senses.

⁸ Rom. 1:18-20. ** See my essay, “Why Luther’s Magisterial/Ministerial Dialectic Does Not Denigrate the Authority of Science...” Op.cit. (2).

they say] *all stars were made on the fourth creation day. The supernova [that] astronomers see in the Large Magellanic Cloud 163,000 light years away **did not occur**.... Fossils do not represent ancient creatures. Coal, oil, gas and topsoil are **not the remains** of thousands of...generations of life. **Nor do**...the stratified layers of Earth's crust testify of rocks subjected to long-term pressure, erosion, and stress. **Nor do**... ice layers demark real years past. **Nor** [are the high] mountains on the Earth [caused by real] ongoing natural processes."⁹ **Neither**, I personally add, are sharply-angled fractures in rock formations, which could only occur *after* it is hardened¹⁰ (an impossibility if, as YECs argue, there was only one single 40-day global flood in the history of the world).*

Ross further states that these must, from a YEC perspective, "**be illusions** [so that] *knowledge of anything apart from the Bible's words cannot be trusted. As Henry Morris insisted, the '[written] testimony from the Creator [is] the only way to know the age of the earth.'* Consequently [they assert], *virtually all research, including the vast scientific database, has led humanity astray.*"¹¹

3. YEC **dismisses a conception of truth that is universally-embraced** for its being firmly grounded on the expectation of a harmony between assertions declared and the *actuality* of the circumstances that pertain to them. This denial of what is regarded as a first principle of logic (*the law of non-contradiction*) is a ploy that the Bible never employs, but to the contrary utterly rejects.¹²
4. YEC thereby **deprives Christianity of the only possible means for substantiating its truth** under the very standards of validation that educated culture trusts.¹³ This goal can only conceivably be achieved by actual demonstration that Scripture harmonizes with the established facts under consideration. Ironically, while YEC **suppresses** certain scientific data; *Old-Cosmos Creationism* (OCC) **appeals to such facts** as the very means by which to *confirm* that Scripture is truthful!¹⁴
5. YEC **isolates its adherents** from participating in the scientific enterprise of studying the truth-telling (*emeth* ^{HB} means "truth") works of God in the very things that He has made (Psalm 111:7).

YECs counter the above concerns on the grounds that the Bible declares itself to be God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16) and consequently reflects an Intellect that is infinitely superior to ours (clearly true!). Yet there is NO necessary connection between affirming the inspiration of Scripture and believing the YEC *view* of Genesis 1 is correct. And it bears repeating that suppressing such scientific evidence as conflicts with YEC, **contradicts** St. Paul's declaration that "*God's invisible nature...has been **clearly perceived in the things that have been made*** (Rom.1:20—boldface mine). YEC, on the one hand, deprives Christian apologists of the most powerful *scientific* fact indicating the existence of God (the Big Bang).¹⁵ How much better it is to instead employ that very interpretation of Genesis (OCC) which not only honors the text of Genesis 1, but alone can reconcile Scripture with the *entirety* of human experience.

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⁹ Hugh Ross. *A Matter of Days*, 2nd ed. (RTB, 2015), p. 224. ** See also my paper, "The Biblical Extent of Noah's Flood." Op.cit. (2), pp. 3-4.

¹⁰ "Biblical Extent," Ibid, p. 3.

¹¹ Ross. Op.cit. (9) – boldface mine.

¹² See my papers, "The Covert Refusal of the LCMS to Let Genesis Speak for Itself." ** "Truth is Never Less than One." Op.cit. (2), p. 2.

¹³ See my paper, "When Christians Fail to Take Up their Arms." Op.cit. (2).

¹⁴ Op.cit. (2 and 4).

¹⁵ Op.cit. (2).

