

Glaring Biblical Errors in the Movie, *Genesis: Paradise Lost*

Although the movie “*Genesis: Paradise Lost*” (GPL), is a beautiful production that is a feast to both eyes and ears, its’ central message entails significant blunders that violate the text of the first chapter of Genesis on numerous fronts. It also engages in logical fallacies, and glaringly misconstrues vital aspects of its primary “whipping boy,” the Big Bang (BB). This cluster of errors is symptomatic of GPL’s larger reactionary posture against scientific knowledge with respect to origins. This antipathy fails to apprehend St. Paul’s positive posture toward the authority of natural knowledge (science) identified in Romans 1:18-20. For these reasons, even though I sincerely applaud GPL’s intentions to both elevate the authority of Scripture and evangelize our present generation (I share them!), it instead *illegitimately* imposes a chasm between the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16), and the testimony of nature (Rom 1:20). It also tragically imposes a stumbling block which hinders the scientifically-inclined from considering the claims of the Gospel (see my paper, “*The Elephant Standing Between Secularists and their Receptivity to the Gospel*”). Consider then the specific errors which I will first highlight and then answer below. Every essay of mine cited here can in every case be found at my website: www.christianityontheoffense.com.

1. It is clearly incorrect for GPL to suggest that Genesis ch. 1 cannot accommodate the BB. Since 1:2 begins with the Hebrew copula *waw* (“and”), this construction according to Hebrew grammar indicates that the previous verse (1:1) cannot be a heading, but is the first episode of the narrative (story) itself. It recounts the creation of the heavens and the earth as God’s first creative act. So GPL is mistaken in its assertion that the earth stood solitary as the very first object of creation. What 1:1-2 instead says is that the heavens (including the earth) were created within a period of unspecified time-frame prior Day 1 (beginning at v. 3). Indeed there is absolutely no exegetical (textual) prohibition in these verses of any finite amount of time, including billions of years. Only on *Day 1* in v. 3 does the earth become the solitary focus of God’s work-week. 1:1 doesn’t even fit the grammatical category of a heading (as 2:4a by contrast does). GPLs’ mistaken assumption that 1:1 is a title also leads to two awkward consequences including firstly that within the *narrative*, no mention of the creation of either the heavens or the earth could be found anywhere! Furthermore, if it were true that 1:1 was a title, its reference to “the heavens” would oddly have absolutely connection to the remainder of the chapter.

In addition, the GPL insistence that the sun and the moon were created on Day 4 neglects the difference in the relevant vocabulary employed on Day 4 as opposed to in 1:1. While the latter uses the word *bara* (meaning to create out of nothing by God), the three verbs (*yehee, haya, asah*) on Day 4, basically stand for “*to form,*” or “*to cause to appear,*” which are far weaker concepts than is *bara*. The context they are describing concerns the transition from the heavy atmosphere that had obscured these lights during the early earth (1:2) to their subsequent dissipation on Day 4 which allowed these lights to become visible as distinct objects. See my paper, “*How Genesis 1:1 Easily Accommodates the Big Bang.*”

2. GPL is wrong to suggest (repeatedly) that the BB is atheistic. It is, to the contrary, a matter of record that when the BB first came to be acknowledged as the correct accounting for the existence of the cosmos, it was atheists who were its most vocal opponents because they understood that a cosmos with a beginning from nothing necessitates a transcendent creator to bring it into existence. Stephen Hawking to this day seeks to evade the BB for the same reason. Yet it is illogical for anyone to suggest that the BB can be the ultimate *cause* of existence. Although scientists hold that the universe has been expanding since its beginning from a BB, many Christians also believe the same. Yet we do not regard the BB as the *cause* of that beginning, but instead, only as an *effect* from the actual *Causer* of all

existence who is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and us too! As Scripture declares, *“By faith we understand that the whole created order was fashioned by the command of God so that the things we see were brought into existence not from that which appears”* (Hebrews 11:3). It is both scientifically and conceptually impossible for absolute nothingness to bring anything into existence. See my paper, *“Was the Big Bang the Big Beginning?”*

3. When GPL asserts that only God is able to have witnessed the creation event, it is betraying an ignorance of the scientific basis for holding that the BB correctly describes both the beginning and the development of the universe. The grounds for the nearly-unanimous scientific adherence to the BB (despite the problem it poses to atheism) are not secret! While it is of course true that no human being was alive at the beginning of creation, even so, scientists have the means to look back across the history of the universe for the reason that light-travel duration gives them the ability to observe every stage of its expansion virtually all the way back to its beginning. Indeed, every time we observe any heavenly body, including our moon (its’ reflected light takes 3 seconds to reach our eyes), we are looking back into the past. Through advanced optical instruments scientists are becoming increasingly equipped to confirm that the universe arose from a singularity and has been expanding ever since. Furthermore, this data refutes the GPL assertion that the BB isn’t testable. Every scientist who is open to every aspect of the observational evidence without prejudice, and so chooses to investigate it, will reach the same conclusion. See my rebuttal of two Lutheran Witness articles, *“When Science Meets the Church,”* p. 3. Indeed it is disappointing that YECs reject the huge body of evidence supporting the BB since these indications constitute the clearest and most powerful scientific verification of all that the cause of all material existence can only be the God of the Holy Bible.

4. GPL’s assertion that its 24-hour day, young-earth creationist (YEC) interpretation of Genesis 1 is “unassailable” is far from substantiated. Even though Martin Luther held to the 24-hour day view, he conceded on the first page of his Genesis lectures that the text of Genesis 1 is *“difficult to understand”* (Jaroslav Pelikan, ed. *Luther’s Works: Genesis*, v. 1. (American Edition, Concordia, 1958), p. 3). In spite of Luther’s honesty, my own Church body, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), refuses to entertain even a conversation on this state of affairs, despite my requests (see my correspondence with the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) of the LCMS titled, *“Debate Challenge CTCR”*). In reply to the following challenge that the LCMS has publically posted: *“Unless there is compelling reason on the basis of the biblical texts themselves...we are to believe God created the world in six 24-hour days,”* I have picked up the gauntlet with my list of ten substantial grounds for holding that the creation days are indeed longer than 24-hours. To give a few examples, firstly I challenge the claim that the Genesis *“evening...morning”* refrain proves the days are 24-hours each. I reply that such phrasing utterly deviates from the text of Leviticus 23:32, which by contrast *specifies* duration: *“from evening to evening.”* Secondly, although the movie narrators use the definite article (DE) “the” in reference to the creation days (e.g. *“the third day,”* etc.), with few exceptions the DE is not found in the Hebrew text. This implies the “days” are indefinite. Thirdly, since God exists outside of our time (2 Peter 3:8), it is entirely conceivable that His “days” are not ours. Fourthly, on the YEC view, there is no Sun on days 1-3, which would be the normal indicator that the days are 24-hours. See my essay, *“The Biblical Demand to Take Another Look: Ten Exegetical Reasons the Creation Days of Genesis are Non-24 Hour.”*

5. When GPL insists that its YEC interpretation of Genesis alone is God-honoring, it misrepresents the Bible’s own claims as to how its authority is established in the face of scientific knowledge. GPL’s

dismissive posture contradicts St. Paul's stricture in Romans 1:18-20 which forbids suppressing the testimony of nature. There are NO biblical passages which pit revelation *against* the witness of nature as though they conflict. To the contrary, the Holy Spirit speaking through St. Paul not only deems it wickedness to suppress that testimony, He further elevates the same to the status of a convicting law (Rom. 3:19-20) thereby rendering unbelievers culpable for refusing to honor God as Creator. As v. 20 states, "*Ever since the creation of the world [God's] invisible nature, namely His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*" For this reason GPL ought to renounce its participation in blunting this convicting aspect of God's law by its suggestion that the witness of nature can't be trusted! See my essay, "*The Bible Expressly Forbids Suppressing the Testimony of Nature.*"

At the very beginning of GPL, Charles Darwin was blamed for causing people to assume the world is old. In actual fact there is a strong and broad body of evidence that is entirely independent of Darwinism which indicates that the entire cosmos, including the earth, is very old. To give some examples: 1) On the basis of the speed of light, the time it has taken for light to travel from its respective sources (e.g. galaxies) to our optical instruments can be measured in billions of years. The light from our closest galactic neighbor, Andromeda, took 2 ½ million years to reach us. In order for YECs to dismiss this indicator of age, they must, in denial of Rom. 1, suppress as opposed to embrace the plain testimony of the heavens. 2) Ice core samples pertaining to annular snowfalls in the high arctic, indicate time frames of over 800,000 years of deposition (see Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days*. (RTB, 2015), pp. 190f.). 3) Taking into consideration the range of necessary conditions in order for fossilization to in any way occur lead to the conclusion that it is simply impossible for the topography of our entire planet, which obviously includes the Himalayas, to be attributed to a singular deluge. See my two papers, "*The Biblical Extent of Noah's Flood*" and "*The Prints are Everywhere.*"

6. GPL employs dubious lines of argument in their attempts to support its YEC position, including appealing to statements by Jesus to establish the "historical" nature of Genesis. Although I too affirm its historicity, nothing Jesus said proves He affirmed YEC. GPL also raises a concern, "*If we can't trust the first nine chapters of Genesis, how can we trust the resurrection of Jesus Christ?*" Yet this question is utterly absurd. Taken to its logical conclusion, no claims at all to matters of fact, including assertions by the movie narrators, would ever achieve a level of trustworthiness for the reason that the entire human race is prone to errors here and there. Further, since ancient historical narration has been conveyed by varying modes of literary expression that include verse (Psalm 105, Homer's *Illiad*, and Virgil's *Aneid*), GPL lacks grounds for its certitude that its YEC position is the only valid *historical* interpretation of Genesis 1. Finally, Jesus himself would oppose at least posture 5A (above) as indicated by the question he posed to Nicodemus: "*If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe me, how can you believe me if I tell you heavenly things?*" (John 3:12). In 1 John 1:1-3 the Apostle John applies Jesus' very same principle by appealing to three of our modes of perception ("*heard,*" "*seen with our eyes,*" and "*touched with our hands*") in order to affirm our doctrine of the incarnation (John 1:12); not vice-versa. This brings us full circle to Jesus' reply to John the Baptist's emissaries by appealing not to Scripture, but instead to what their senses actually told them (Matt. 11:4). Contrary to the YEC propensity to ignore the logical principle of "non-contradiction," both Jesus and the Apostle John held that revelation must, in *actuality*, harmonize with the phenomena it describes. See my paper, "*Truth is Never Less than One.*"

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