

General Topics :: Letter to a Seminary Professor - Believe Genesis

Letter to a Seminary Professor - Believe Genesis - posted by Renoncer, on: 2013/7/18 11:30

The following text is taken from a letter that a student wrote to his seminary professor who was teaching that people shouldn't believe that God created the world in six literal days.

By the way, if anyone wants to find really good information on that topic, please visit www.creation.com. It is by far the best place to go.

(Dear SEMINARY TEACHER),

If we shouldn't believe that God created the world the way that Genesis 1&2 says that God created the world, then why should we believe that God created Adam and Eve the way Genesis 3 says that God created Adam and Eve, including the Fall account, etc.? If I choose to disbelieve God's Word on the basis of what the secular scientific community says about geology and cosmology, should I not also disbelieve God's Word in regards to anthropology and biology? In fact, the scientific community knows that Adam wasn't the first human being.

Actually, (as the secular scientific community says) the first humans descended from the Kenyapithecus whose fossils have been found (16 million years old), from which came the Homo habilis and the Homo sapiens. We have ample proof (fossil record, carbon dating, etc.). The only way you can challenge this well-established theory is to come up with a totally different paradigm that can explain the fossil record, the origins of the world, and anthropology.

But, we can't just cherry-pick when we want to listen to God's Word, and when we want to listen to the unbelieving world. We can always come up with good reasons not to believe what the Bible says; liberals do that all the time. We just have to follow the tradition of godless critical thinkers such as Adolph Von Harnack, Schweitzer, and Bultmann.

If I take the same arguments against believing that God created the world the way that Genesis 1&2 says that God created the world, and apply them to the rest of the Bible, the result will be the demythologization of the Bible, a convenient compromise for those who want to hold on to the vestige of the Christian faith while following the winds of the secular scientific community. But, perhaps we prefer adopting a theological position that depends on exegetical fallacies such as "illegitimate totality transfer" and "etymological fallacies" or blatant allegorizing of passages that are clearly historical narratives.

Otherwise, we would have to adopt a totally different paradigm that includes cataclysmic events such as the Biblical Flood. (a good alternative)

You may want to look up the writings of Jonathan Sarfati, Emil Sylvestru, and Tas Walker instead of trying to beat down a straw-man and questionable characters such as Kent Hovind and Carl Baugh.

Sincerely,
(STUDENT)

Re: Letter to a Seminary Professor - Believe Genesis, on: 2013/7/30 4:50

thank you brother for this

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2013/7/30 14:47

I believe that it is also "setting up a strawman" to argue that if a person believes that it is possible that Genesis 1 and 2 is not a literal account, that they then don't believe the Bible. Nothing could be further from the truth. Of course some people, like heathens, may not believe in a literal 6 day account and not believe the Bible, but a Christian can certainly "believe the Bible" and question a 6 day literal account. Hugh Ross does, and I assure you he is a Christian AND believes the Bible.

This is because there is some question as to what type of "literature" Gen 1 and 2 is, and whether it was actually INTENDED to be a literal scientific account.

My official position on this issue is that the universe may have been created in 6 days as described in Gen. 1, or it may not have been. I wouldn't be shocked if either were true. But I certainly believe the Bible.

Re: - posted by Renoncer, on: 2013/7/30 17:48

TMK,

I don't know if I would say that the student was setting up a strawman... You may instead want to rephrase it to something like, "His argument is fallacious, because..." or "I don't think that X logically follows Y, because..."

But that's beside the point! :)

That being said, on what BASIS do you think that Genesis 1 and 2 present a different type of literature than Genesis 3? (Please conduct exegesis, and not eisegesis to answer that question.)

If we don't take Genesis 1 and 2 as a record of actual history (inerrant, of course), then I don't see on what basis we can decide to take Genesis 3 as a record of actual history.

I would argue that Genesis 3 follows the historical account of Genesis 2 based on two things:

- 1) Context: It is a continuation of the historical account of Adam and Eve.
- 2) Grammar: The waw-consecutive that is consistently used in both Genesis 2 and Genesis 3 reveals succession in the historical narrative.

By the way, have you looked through www.creation.com or read their articles?

In Christ,
Renoncer

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2013/7/30 21:42

Hey Renoncer-

I have done very much reading on both sides of this issue.. not sure if I have checked out the website you mentioned but I have read a lot on Ken Ham's site, etc. And I have read a lot on Hugh Ross's site and read a couple of his books.

I am not going to debate this issue because I know where that will lead and I am truly undecided on the issue. In my heart of hearts I believe the universe is more than 15000 years old but if it is not, it doesn't really matter to me. I mean I wouldn't be bummed out or anything.

I just find it a little irritating when a person accuses someone who is open to an ancient universe of "not believing the Bible." You are right-- that is not a straw man but is exceedingly presumptuous.

As a side note, have you ever noticed how much happens on day 6 per Gen 2 (and Gen 1)? I find it amazing to say the

east(not totally unbelievable, just amazing). I mean, God creates the land animals, then He creates Adam, puts him in the garden to tend it, tells him to name the animals, which apparently he does, he then figures out he is lonely; he undergoes surgery, Eve is created and there they are in the garden together, naked and unashamed. Amazing!

At any rate, I do not believe this is an issue to divide over or to even seriously debate. I am sure you disagree with this, but that is okay.

Re: - posted by Renoncer, on: 2013/7/30 22:26

TMK,

Well, for someone who doesn't have an opinion on the matter and does not want to debate, you sure take pleasure in throwing counter-arguments!

haha :)

Well, since you are moving the debate forward, I will respond to some of your counter-arguments:

As for what happened on day six, I do not think it is as amazing as you make it sound:

I) Adam named three different categories of creatures: 1.The cattle; 2.The fowl of the air; 3.The beasts of the field. Not that bad.

Plus, he named them by "kinds", which encompasses very BROAD lines. (For example, lions, cats, tigers, leopards, and cougars all come from the same KIND.)

II) It doesn't take 12 hours for God to form a creature from someone's ribs. It takes Him an instant.

III) Even if the events of day six were incredible (which I don't think they are as incredible as you make them sound), God accomplishes many incredible things in this world! Imagine if I decided to start doubting miracles on that basis! After all, He is GOD ALMIGHTY!

It seems to me that much of the arguments against taking Genesis 1 and 2 as history are not rooted in the Biblical text, but rather in extra-biblical presuppositions.

We need to be careful about adopting secular glasses when we go to the Bible. There is only a thin line between doing that and plain unbelief.

We have three options:

- 1) Decide for ourselves what we want to believe;
- 2) Let the world tell us what to believe (which goes back to no.1);
- 3) Believe what God tells us.

I choose to believe what God tells me, even when it means correcting my wrong presuppositions.

In Christ,
Renoncer

P.S.: You should really look up www.creation.com

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2013/7/31 7:29

Hi Renoncer-

Actually, my reference to the events of Day 6 was not intended as a counter-argument (it wouldn't be a very good one, for the reasons you mentioned). It is just that I had went back and looked at Gen 1 and 2 again and it struck me that a lot happened on Day 6. I had known this before of course but it just struck me again. Like I said, I did not say it was unbelievable, just amazing. You don't have to think it was amazing, but I certainly do.

My final observation is just to comment on your statement:

"It seems to me that much of the arguments against taking Genesis 1 and 2 as history are not rooted in the Biblical text, but rather in extra-biblical presuppositions."

I am not sure exactly what you mean; you might be saying that we need to ignore all science when we interpret the Bible, but I hope you aren't saying this. There is a real world around us that begs our observation.

Hugh Ross says something along the lines that good science and scripture will never contradict each other. Where there appears to be a contradiction, either the science or scripture is being misinterpreted.

I guess that is pretty much how I view this issue. The Bible seems to suggest a young universe (several thousand years?) and science suggests a very old universe (10-15 billion years?). This is a HUGE discrepancy. I, personally, find it hard to believe that if the universe IS only 5000-15000 years old that science could get it THAT wrong. I realize science has been wrong before; I am just not sure if it is possible that science is THAT wrong about the age of the universe. But I still leave open the possibility that science IS in fact dead wrong about the age of the universe.

I also wanted to let you know that while I am open to the idea that the earth may be billions of years old, I am decidedly NOT a believer in macroevolution.

You can have the last word!

Re: - posted by Renoncer, on: 2013/7/31 13:59

TMK,

The reason secular scientists come up with millions and billions of years is because of THEIR MATERIALISTIC PRESUPPOSITIONS. They filter the data and the facts through that framework, and thus they can only make sense of it that way.

A priori, they cannot accept a framework that includes:

- The supernatural
- Spontaneous creation
- The Global Flood
- God's intervention in history

On the other hand, the reason creationist scientists come up with thousands of years is because of THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE BIBLE. They filter the data and the facts through that framework, and thus they can make sense of the geological and biological data by means of what has been revealed in the Bible, including God's supernatural power, spontaneous creation, and cataclysmic events such as the Global Flood.

You should really look up www.creation.com, or read "The Mythology of Modern Dating Methods" (John Woodmorappe).

I would urge you to rethink your presuppositions (and the presuppositions of those who have informed you not to take Genesis as an accurate historical record).

My commitment is first and foremost to SUBMIT to the WORD OF GOD. When it contradicts what I think is true, I honestly reconsider my beliefs. Otherwise, I might just find myself fighting against God.

In Christ,
Renoncer

Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2013/7/31 14:03

The Lord can do whatever He wants to do in the way He wants to do it and if He chooses to tell me that He made the universe in 6 days, then I am going to take it at face value. I am not going to argue vainly over words and ifs and ors and buts. Forget it. I don't care what science says. I don't care about all the books and all the research and all the technology that we have today that gives me a "greater" understanding of the Bible and what God actually meant. Do you think a brother in a 3rd world country is worse off because he only has the Word of God to learn by, but no other books? Absolutely not.

Go ahead, take this argument to North Korea or China or Belarus to the brothers there and see what they say. They'd kick you out of their church and label you a heretic for arguing about this stuff. It is the Holy Spirit that teaches us through the Word of God. Throw everything else away that even thinks to lift itself up above the Word of God through the Spirit as our source of truth or that sheds 'light' on what scripture really means. Truthfully, they only cast shadows and doubt across the scriptures. Am I saying all other books are garbage. No, not as long as they are submissive to scripture in all aspects. But these arguments are designed by men to lift themselves up above the scriptures as the source of authority--an authority that belongs only to the Lord.

How did it come to this? It is because we focus on affluence, on knowledge that puffs up, and because we live in a post-modern culture. It is the epitome of what the Apostle Paul said. Our society is ALWAYS learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. We are instructed to avoid such men, since they are useless in regards to the faith! TMK, don't get caught up with them. Determine in your heart to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified. You want to grow deeper with the Lord, focus yourself on Christ and Him crucified. God forbid that we should glory in anything save the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world was crucified to us and us to the world!

I wasted far too much of my life learning useless things that made me no closer to the Lord, nor did it foster a greater love for Him or the Brethren. It's all trash. It's all useless.

I find science really cool. I enjoy a lot of stuff that I have learned can be done. My favorite thing I ever learned was how a neodymium magnet, dropped through an aluminum pipe will slow down due to eddy currents. I have some really interesting ideas about how that can be used. And I appreciate how the Lord designed that to happen. But the moment science begins to encroach upon the Word of God in order to pounce on it like a lion to its destruction is the same instance in which I throw it all away.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2013/7/31 14:33

Renoncer/Havok-

Not debating (I really don't want to) but your replies brought a question to mind.

Is there ANY TYPE of scientific evidence that you would consider in possibly accepting an ancient universe date?

Of course this is only a hypothetical question, because I am not even sure what that type of evidence might be.

Here is an example of what I mean from the opposite standpoint. Several years ago I was arguing the Bible with an agnostic guy I used to work with. I mentioned the flood, and asked him what he would think if they actually did find a great big boat on the mountains of Ararat preserved in the ice with compartments for animals and that fit the dimensions of the ark described in the Bible-- would he accept this as evidence of Noah's flood? His response was that all that would prove is that they found a big boat up on the mountain. In other words, he seemed to go out of his way to ignore plain evidence to maintain his agnosticism. He was incredibly frustrating to say the least!

So I guess my question is similar- is there any type of evidence you can think of that might convince you that the universe is billions of years old?

(Now, I realize that there might not be any such evidence because the earth might not really be billions of years old. I get that. And I know that creation websites have an answer for every evidence for an ancient universe proffered thus far).

I am just wondering if there is any evidence you might find convincing, hypothetically of course. Short of aliens showing us home movies of the early earth or time travel, I am not sure what evidence might be convincing. Of course, that evidence might not be convincing either.

I hope you understand the gist of what I am asking.

Re: - posted by Renoncer, on: 2013/7/31 15:06

TMK,

The question you are asking is misleading.

If I answer that no evidence would convince me, you will accuse me of being a blind ignorant.

If I answer that some evidence might convince me, I am undermining the foundation on which I stand.

A fair question would be: "Do you think it is possible for evidence to prove that the earth is not as young as the Bible makes it out to be? (when taken at face value, of course)" Then, the answer would be: NO!

Do you realize the danger of not taking the Bible at face value? It is a slippery slope into unbelief.

- 1) You start questioning more and more passages
- 2) You start adopting preposterous views such as a LOCAL FLOOD that somehow surpassed the heights of Mount Ararat (16,854 feet high!)
- 3) You adopt a skeptical approach to God's Word, instead of adopting a submissive approach to God's Word
- 4) You start suppressing the plain truths of Scripture based on your own feelings

I have noticed a dangerous pattern: Those who refuse to take Genesis at face value tend to eventually reject a whole host of other critical doctrines, such as the eternal destination of human beings (namely, eternal life or eternal torment), the historical accuracy of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the supernatural works of God in history, the exclusivist truth claims of the Gospel, and so much more.

I'm not saying that everyone goes down that path, but it is a common thing, and a pattern that I have observed. It usually comes as a package deal, you can't reject one thing only...

Please reconsider your heart's attitude towards God's Word, especially passages that challenge your beliefs. Please reconsider your presuppositions.

In Christ,
Renoncer

Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2013/7/31 15:18

There is no evidence that can convince me of something other than the following point (which you totally missed):

It doesn't matter. Scientific evidence or no, I take the Bible at face value unless the Bible tells me not to.

But more than that, we follow Christ. That's ALL that matters. TMK, stop and think about that. NOTHING else matters apart from Jesus Christ. ALL doctrine and ALL truth and ALL things that are worth knowing are wrapped up in Him! So spend your time studying Him. Spend your time knowing Him. Spend your life wrapped up in Jesus Christ and throw everything else to the wind. It's all dross. It's all vanity. It's all worthless and rubbish apart from knowing Christ.

This is my goal: to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death. Period. That's it. Everything else is garbage.

If you really understand what I am saying, it is going to radically change your life and the way you think.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2013/7/31 15:32

Renoncer wrote:

"A fair question would be: "Do you think it is possible for evidence to prove that the earth is not as young as the Bible makes it out to be?" Then, the answer would be: NO!"

Fair enough. I was not trying to trick you with my question.

Hi Havok- I agree with everything you are saying and that is my (and should be everyone's) goal- i.e. to follow Christ wholeheartedly and without reservation.

But this is a discussion forum and I find this topic interesting to discuss- to a point.

If you think I spend my time "studying" the age of the earth theories, I certainly do not. It is a passing interest. And again, I have already said that I am not a proponent of a billions of years old universe; what I said is that I am open to the idea. But I don't spend my spare time studying it or debating it. I don't care about it that much, and as you stated there are far more important and vital things to be doing.