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REFUTING COMPROMISE

By Dan Reynolds, PhD

Master Books has just released a new book entitled *Refuting Compromise* by Answers in Genesis staff member Jonathan Sarfati. While the main thrust of *Refuting Compromise* is a theological and scientific refutation of progressive creationism as advanced by Christian astronomer Hugh Ross, it is also an up-to-date review and defense of young earth creation (YEC) science in general. *Refuting Compromise* is thoroughly documented with references, websites, drawings, illustrations, and photographs. This article is a review of the main topics discussed in the book.

The book starts with a comparison between progressive creationism and YEC. Progressive creationism teaches that the days of creation week are vast and overlapping ages; that the sun, moon, and stars were created on the first 'day' and merely appeared on the 4th 'day'; that physical death existed during the billions of years before the Fall and that the majority of the fossil record was therefore formed at that time; that the standard model of Big Bang theory is true; that Noah's Flood was local and not global; that soulless hominids lived before Adam; that the Fall only involved spiritual death of humans; that radiometric dating is valid; that God created every species individually rather than by kinds; and that we are still in the seventh day of creation 'week' in which God is no longer creating. While the position of YEC towards Biblical interpretation is *sola scriptura* (scripture only), Ross' philosophy is apparently *scriptura sub scientia* (scripture under science). Ross has said that nature is the 67th book of the Bible. In practice this has meant accepting as true most of secular geological and astronomical *interpretations* of the data as fact. Since these 'facts' require that the earth and universe be billions of years old, Ross attempts to make scripture fit within these frameworks. Sarfati reminds us that that "if we marry our theology to today's science, we'll be widowed tomorrow" and that "the biblical framework is non-negotiable, scientific models proposed to elucidate this framework should be held loosely." The main areas of agreement between the progressive creationism and YEC positions are the inerrancy of scripture and the rejection of molecules-to-man evolution.

Sarfati shows that the word for day (Hebrew: *yom*) used in Genesis 1 refers to a normal 24 hour day. This interpretation is consistent with the fact that *yom* always refers to a 24 hour period or the daylight portion of a day outside of Genesis 1 whenever it is used together with morning, evening, or a number. Many other passages are mentioned which show that various biblical writers and characters, including Jesus (Mk 10:6), understood the days of creation week as a brief period.

God warns Adam of the deadly consequences of disobedience 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*.

Ross claims that since Adam did not physically die at the moment of his disobedience, the curse must have involved spiritual death only. But the Hebrew translated literally is "dying you shall die." When Adam disobeyed and the Fall took place, the *process* of physical death began. Sarfati likens the situation to a branch cut off from a tree; the branch continues to live for a short while – cells divide, leaves grow – but its death apart from the tree is certain. So the inclusion of physical death in the curse is more consistent.

Ross claims that the sun must have been created on the first day of creation week since otherwise there would not have been any light for the plants created on day 3. Sarfati suggests that the light source during the first three days of creation was God himself. This is what will be the situation in the New Jerusalem (Rev 22:5).

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Indeed, early church writers used the fact that the sun, moon, and stars were created on the 4th day as a polemic against paganism.

Ross claims there would have been too little time on day 6 for Adam to have accomplished all his tasks in a 24 hour day. But Sarfati points out that Adam was only charged with naming the land vertebrates, about 2500 basic kinds, and could have easily finished the job in the afternoon with time to spare. Sarfati also counters Ross's claims that Gen 2:19 seems to contradict Genesis 1.

Sarfati shows that the majority of Christians and even some non-Christian historians who lived before the 19th century believed either the creation days were 24 hours long or less or that the earth was only a few thousand years old. Notable on the list are Josephus, Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, James Ussher, Johannes Kepler, Isaac Newton, and John Wesley. Sarfati lists many more.

Sarfati also discusses how there is no good way to reconcile the sequence of events in Genesis 1 with any evolutionary scenarios.

A chapter is devoted to the Big Bang and Astronomy. Ross believes in the Big Bang and standard evolutionary theories concerning the formation of stars, galaxies, solar systems, and planets. Sarfati discusses relativity, the Cosmological Principle, galactic redshifts, the cosmic microwave background radiation, inflation theory, and the elemental composition of the universe. He then discusses problems such as quantized redshifts, the horizon problem, the apparent rotation of the universe, the *ad hoc* nature of inflation theory, the missing antimatter, the discovery of fully formed spiral galaxies shortly after the Big Bang, the apparent lack of any population 3 stars, and the faint sun paradox. He also discusses problems with evolutionary theories concerning the formation of the moon and the planets Neptune and Uranus. The first and second laws of thermodynamics demonstrate the universe had a beginning. Quantum fluctuations can't create virtual particles without starting with vacuum energy. Ross believes in string theory and claims its extra dimensions that allow God to have an infinite amount of time at any given moment in our timeframe. However, Sarfati points out that God does not have to work within time but is most probably beyond or outside of time. The branes theory and multiverse theory are discussed as unprovable and with no observational support. Sarfati discusses how the fundamental forces of nature and many particular quantities are fine tuned for human life. Sarfati then goes on to explain Russell Humphreys' white hole cosmology and how it not only solves most of the aforementioned problems but also the starlight time problem for YEC.

A chapter is devoted to death and suffering. Ross believes that physical death was always a part of God's plan and not a result of the Fall. Sarfati points out that God called His creation "very good" making the initial

operation of physical death unlikely. Also, the fact that the "last enemy" God will destroy is death (1 Cor 15:26) does not make sense if God made his "very good" creation with death built in from the start. Man and the animals were originally made to be vegetarian (Gen 1:29). Prey/predator relationships will cease when God returns to set up His kingdom (Is 11:6-7). In Gen 3:19, God explains that part of Adam's punishment will be that he would return to the ground (die); there would have been no point in explaining this if physical death was already a part of the plan. Sarfati discusses the changes brought about by the Fall including death (physical and spiritual) and suffering in work and childbirth, Ross claims that the death of plants proves his case, but God does not regard the life of plants the same as animals. Apoptosis, a programmed orderly cell death during the fetal development of vertebrates, is a design feature built in by God and not a result of the Fall in contrast to necrosis, an unprogrammed disorderly cell death which causes an inflammatory response.

Sarfati explains the Second Law of Thermodynamics was not a result of the Fall because it deals with necessary processes such as heat flow, friction, and digestion. He says that God removed some of His sustaining protection after the Fall allowing physical death to enter. If the fossil record was truly formed before the Fall, why did God create so many animals which eventually became extinct before Adam was on the scene?

The next chapter dealt with created kinds. Ross believes that God made all the diverse species individually whereas YEC believe God made a few basic kinds that had the genetic potential to *microevolve* into the various species we see today. Microevolution takes place not by creating new information but by removing information and the activation/deactivation of genes. Two animals are of the same kind if they can hybridize to produce fertile offspring. Many examples of hybridization now exist such as wolphins (cross between false killer whale and a bottlenose dolphin), the cross between wolves and poodles, and the cross between a husky and a jackal (jascky). Ross says there would not have been enough time since the Ark for all the diversity of life to have formed. But Sarfati points out that rapid speciation has been observed for guppies, lizards, daisies, mice, mosquitoes, fruit flies, and cichlid fish; all that is needed to trigger rapid speciation is the genetic information (built in by God so animals could adapt to changing environments) and isolation. There is not much speciation today because most of the ecological niches have been filled.

The next chapter deals with the Flood and Noah's Ark. Sarfati explains from the scriptures and science why the Flood had to be global instead of local. He discusses the geographical distribution of humans and the adequacy of the Ark's size to accommodate the animals. He ex-

plains how 8 people could have cared for the animals, how many church fathers accepted a global Flood, and the evidences for rapid deposition of the fossil record (cross bedding caused by strong underwater currents, the lack of erosion between layers, fossil ripple marks and footprints, polystrate fossils, etc). He then explains the theory of Catastrophic Plate Tectonics (CPT) and how it can explain the Flood, the breakup of Pangea (the original supercontinent), the formation of mountain ranges and ocean basins, the rapid reversals of the earth's magnetic field seen in the magnetic striping on the ocean floor, and the formation of the majority of sedimentary rock layers. He cites incompletely assimilated subducted oceanic crust in the mantle as evidence of recent subduction.

In the next chapter, Sarfati discusses the history of mankind. Ross believes Adam was created up to 70,000 years ago and that there were soulless pre-Adamic hominids. Sarfati argues that the fossil, biochemical, and archeological evidence shows that the hominids were essentially the same as modern men. He discusses the genealogies of the Bible and shows how they are most likely complete and therefore disallow a date for Adam much beyond six to seven thousand years ago. Also, standard dating techniques and fossil interpretations (which Ross trusts) have shown that humans were widely distributed throughout the world so that a local Flood would have failed to destroy all human life.

The next chapter dealt with Biblical old age arguments. Sarfati systematically shows how several of Ross's theological claims don't ring true.

The next chapter dealt with science and a young earth. Sarfati cites several evidences for a young earth including the rate of decay of the earth's magnetic field, excess helium in zircons, the amount of salt in the sea, the lack of old super nova remnants, the rapid disappearance of comets, lunar recession, the discovery of intact dinosaur blood cells and hemoglobin presumably 65 million years old, various radiohalos in metamorphic rock suggesting rapid rock formation and accelerated radioactive decay, "double" polonium radiohalos in partially coalified trees from three layers presumably spanning 200 million years that demonstrate the layers were formed at the same time, and the lack of erosion of the continents assuming they are billions of years old.

The last chapter of the book dealt with refuting old earth arguments. Topics discussed included varves, rate of sedimentary layer formation, Mt. St. Helens, coal formation, fossil forests, and radiometric dating. The basics of radiometric dating are explained including the isochron method. The various ways isochrons can be misleading are discussed. The findings of the RATE (Radioisotopes and the Age of The Earth) group are discussed including

evidence for accelerated nuclear decay and the residual radiocarbon found in carbonaceous materials spanning the entire geologic column suggesting simultaneous and recent burial of these materials consistent with Noah's Flood.

In conclusion, *Refuting Compromise* is a comprehensive refutation of progressive creation and also an excellent apologetic for young earth creation. It is highly recommended reading for all interested in creation. It is available from Answers in Genesis (www.answersingenesis.org). ☞

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, May 13, 7:30 P.M., Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh

Video, *GRAND CANYON: Monument to the Flood*. Help yourself to understand and clear up some of the current controversy on the Grand Canyon by coming out and viewing the recent video titled, *GRAND CANYON: Monument to the Flood*. Your personal tour of the Grand Canyon brought to you by five creation geologists who know it best! Answer the hard questions about the origin and history of Grand Canyon. Learn how Grand Canyon is best understood in the light of scripture. You may wish to prepare yourself by ordering the new picture book, *GRAND CANYON, A Different View*, that stirred up the evolutionists and brought national media attention by having this book at the Grand Canyon bookstore. To purchase the book, call AIG at 1-800-778-3390.

Thursday, June 10, 7:30 P.M., Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh

Speaker, Dan Reynolds, PhD. Topic to be announced

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