

The evidence from Egypt is no more comforting than that from Israel. Whether the Exodus from Egypt is placed in the 13<sup>th</sup> C BC or the 15<sup>th</sup> C BC, evidence for the existence of Moses and Israelite slavery, and a sudden migration of 2 million people, is sadly lacking. In its 18 December 1995 edition, *Time* magazine summed up current archaeological opinion when it refers to, 'the Old Testament where the evidence is contradictory or still absent, including slavery in Egypt, the existence of Moses, the Exodus and Joshua's military conquest of the Holy Land' (p. 54).

So not everything in the garden is lovely and I see no reason to regard traditional Egyptian chronology as a sacred cow which cannot be touched. Egyptian dates are not 'astronomically fixed' as some would like to believe, and Egyptologists have their problems. Synchronisms between Rameses II and Muwatallis would place the elimination of the Hittites at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC, but according to the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III and Sennacherib, the Assyrians were still waging all out war with the Hittites in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, and the Bible even seems to place the Hittites ahead of the great Egyptian armies in the 9<sup>th</sup> C BC (1 Kings 7:6).

The TIP<sup>4</sup> is the vulnerable period of Egyptian history, despite Kenneth Kitchen's desperate struggle to prop it up, and I believe that is where centuries need to be dropped out of the time scale. Kitchen described David Rohl's book *A Test of Time* as a 'waste of time', but I agree with Professor Colin Renfrew, Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge University (who is not exactly a pseudo-scholar). He wrote in the forward to James' book, 'I feel that their critical analysis is right, and that a chronological revolution is on its way' (p. XVI).

Concerning Alan Montgomery's letter, I see no reason to question the historicity of the 480 years in 1 Kings 6:1. The periods in the book of Judges are quite consistent with 480 years when it is recognized that these periods are not all consecutive. For instance, the 40 years oppression by

the Philistines in the south west could be contemporary with the 18 years oppression by the Ammonites to the east of Israel.

Concerning Paul's statement in Acts 13:19, I consider the UBS text to be preferable. This is translated in the RSV and others as

'When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave them their land as an inheritance for about 450 years [that is from the destruction of the 7 nations until the end of the united monarchy] and after that [that is after he gave them the land] He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.'

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2. Finkelstein, I., *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, Israel Exploration Society, Ben-Zvi Printing Enterprises Ltd, Jerusalem, pp. 15, 16, 1988.
3. Zertal, A. To the Land of the Perizzites and the Giants: On the Israelite Settlement in the Hill Country of Manasseh; in: Finkelstein, I. and Naaman, N., (Eds), *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*, Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem, Israel and Biblical Archaeology Society, Washington, pp. 47-69. 1994; p. 66.
4. TIP is a recognized archaeological abbreviation for the Third Intermediate Period of Egypt, sometimes referred to as 'The Dark Ages' because we are in the dark as to what happened during this period. According to revisionists, the reason we have so little information about it is that it did not exist as independent dynasties.

## The Intelligent Design Movement

I am thankful for the book reviews *TJ* publishes. They are very helpful, not just in summarizing a book's argument but also in analyzing it. I was

interested to read Royal Truman's review of Phillip Johnson's *The Wedge of Truth*.<sup>1</sup> The summary was good, but I would like to go one step further in analysis. While I appreciate very much what the brilliant and articulate Johnson has written about biological evolution and philosophical naturalism, we need to dare to question not only the 'materialist high priests' (as Truman put it), but also the Intelligent Design Movement's (IDM) 'high priest' (Johnson). Truman quotes Johnson from page 151 of his book but leaves out the words which reveal the fatal flaw in Johnson's (and the rest of the IDM's) whole approach. Johnson's full quote reads as follows:

'The place to begin is with the Biblical passage that is most relevant to the evolution controversy. It is not in Genesis; rather, it is the opening of the Gospel of John.'

Johnson makes a bold assertion here (without any Biblical, theological, philosophical or logical justification either before or after the statement) that Christians who want to think rightly about the creation-evolution debate and engage with skeptics on the subject can, indeed should, ignore Genesis! But Genesis is without question **the most important** part of the Bible for this debate and the Apostle John started his Gospel the way he did because he believed, as his Master did, the literal truth of Genesis 1-11. Johnson is seriously wrong in telling Christians (the readers of his *IVPress* book), in essence, that it does not matter what God said in Genesis.

We need to increasingly alert Christians to the fatal flaw of the IDM on this point. Christians (including leaders in the IDM and those who feel more comfortable with the IDM position than the young-Earth creationist position) need to stop ignoring the most important data in the universe—the inspired, inerrant and abundantly clear words of the Creator in Genesis 1-11. There seems to be a willful ignorance of Scripture by Christians in the IDM, which is something that is warned against in 2 Peter 3:5 (see NIV or KJV for the best translations of the original

Greek text). The IDM seems to pride itself on being much more scientific, scholarly and philosophically sophisticated than young-Earth creationists, whose degrees and scientific knowledge are apparently considered suspect, or at least deficient, by many IDM proponents (even though thousands of young-Earth creationists around the world have earned an M.Sc. or Ph.D. from a secular university where they studied under evolutionists). But it is not scholarly or philosophical sophisticated to ignore the Word of Almighty God. And IDM proponents are criticized and opposed just as much by the evolutionary establishment as are young-Earth creationists, despite IDM claims that they are getting a better hearing. For example, see John Woodmorappe and Jonathan Sarfati's review of Kenneth Miller's *Finding Darwin's God*.<sup>2</sup>

If the IDM proponents respond by saying that it is their strategy to engage the materialists on the scientific level only, because the materialists will not accept arguments based on Scriptural authority, then we need to make the following three points clear. One, young-Earth creationists know how to discuss only the scientific evidence in a secular public setting, such as a lecture or debate at a university. I, and many other young-Earth creationists, have been doing this for years even before the IDM was born. Secondly, even in these secular contexts, young-Earth creationists have found that many unbelievers are open to and interested in knowing what the Bible says on the subject, even if they don't yet believe it is the inspired Word of God. Thirdly, when speaking to Christians (e.g. in books, churches, seminaries or Bible colleges), as Johnson was doing in his IVP book and as he did at my seminary when I was getting my M.Div. in the early 90s, we must consider first and foremost what the Word of God says, beginning from the very first verse in Genesis. Young-Earth creationists have been doing this for years, and should keep doing so without apology or compromise.

I would like to mention briefly

three more of the several additional serious flaws of the IDM.

First is the IDM leaders' (starting with Johnson himself) insistence that the age of the Earth is a divisive side issue and that the real issue is philosophical naturalism dominating science. Because of their ignoring of Scripture and their apparent refusal to critically examine the arguments for billions of years in geological and astronomical evolution IDM leaders fail to see that philosophical naturalism controls geology and astronomy as much, or even more, than it controls biology. Certainly, speaking historically, we can say that naturalism gained control of geology and astronomy **before** it conquered the biological sciences. In fact, the former laid the foundation for the latter, which then has been the basis for evolutionizing every other field of study in the university. So the age and history of the Creation strikes at the very heart of the stranglehold of science by philosophical naturalism. Evolution is a rope made of three inseparable cords: biological evolution (origin and historical development of life), geological evolution (origin and historical development of planet Earth) and astronomical evolution (origin and historical development of the cosmos and heavenly bodies). Christians are not really dealing with evolution or philosophical naturalism properly or adequately, if they do not realize this and respond to the question of the ages of the earth and universe.

Second, the IDM leads a person no further than to belief in a vaguely defined 'intelligent designer'. This designer, according to Michael Behe, a leader in the IDM, may not even be a god, but only alien beings from outer space. Scripture (e.g. Psalm 19:1-6, Romans 1:18-21 and Acts 17:22-31), on the other hand, says that the Creation bears clear witness to the true and living God, Creator of heaven and Earth. The IDM therefore is overlooking much of the evidence (which points to God's holiness, justice and wrath, as well as his love and intelligence and power). As a result, there are strange bedfellows in the IDM: deists, pantheists and various kinds of

theists. This approach of just looking for design and using it in defense of the existence of God (however vaguely He may be defined) has been tried before (in the early 1800s in England) primarily by Christians and Deists who accepted the idea of an Earth much older than the Bible teaches. And it failed miserably to convert infidels or to stop the cultural slide away from Biblical Christianity towards atheism. I think it failed precisely because the theology was fuzzy and there was shallow analysis of the philosophical assumptions of old-Earth geological and old-universe astronomical theories. In contrast, many people, even scientists, are being won to Christ, and Christians are being won back to faith in Scripture by the use of young-Earth creationist arguments.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, intelligent design does not even adequately explain the biological world, because Scripture tells us that because of the fall of man in sin, the whole Creation is under a curse (Genesis 3, Romans 8:18-23). Intelligent design cannot explain the problem of evil and corruption (violent carnivores, disease, genetic mutations that handicap creatures, etc.) that we see in the biological world. Even the people groups and languages of the world are largely the result of God's wrath poured out at the tower of Babel. So intelligent design has severely limited explanatory power.

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### References

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2. Woodmorappe, J. and Sarfati, J., Mutilating Miller, *TJ* 15(3):29-35, 2001.
3. See: A testimony: 'Joel Galvin' faith shipwrecked by compromising 'Christian' colleges; restored by *Answers in Genesis*, <[www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/feedback/joel\\_galvin\\_testimony.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/feedback/joel_galvin_testimony.asp)>.