

## The Beginnings Under Attack Chapter 1 – “In the Beginning”



**Review By Greg Neyman**  
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Answers In Creation Website  
[www.answersincreation.org/attack1.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/attack1.htm)

The author starts right away planting seeds of doubt about the historicity of the earth. He says the term "pre-historic" is "an admission that there is no historic basis for the eras which are proposed." This is only partially true. It depends on what you mean by historic basis. True, there is no written history for the billions of years the universe has existed...but there is a "physical history," which we can observe in the rocks and in the stars. In fact, the science of Astronomy only has the past to study. Light, arriving from earth from distant stars and galaxies, has been in transit for millions or billions of years. When you look at a star that is 10,000 light years away, you are observing it as it appeared 10,000 years ago. A galaxy which is 10 billion light years away appears to us as it existed 10 billion years ago. Astronomers are observing historic events as they occurred many years ago!

Sheffield says the inspiration of the Bible is being questioned today by pastors, seminary professors, and church leaders. I agree, there are many churches which are liberal, and do not accept a literal Genesis. His words do not affect progressive creationists, nor do they impact other conservative old earth believers of the Gap or Theistic Evolution belief.

He goes on to call these liberals "infiltrators and traitors in the camp of the "believers."" If you are an old earth believer who does not take the Word literally, his words applies to you. With that said, Sheffield is merely stating his belief, with no arguments here to back up the infiltrator and traitor claim. Thus, all old earth believers can ignore these statements.

In the middle of page 18, of evolution he says, "very few people have ever taken the time to consider the great mass of evidence against the theory." This so-called mass of evidence, from young earth creationist scientists, has all been shown to not present any valid arguments against evolution. In other words, evolutionists have an answer for every claim made by young earth creationists (see the No Answers in Genesis website, or [www.talkorigins.org](http://www.talkorigins.org)).

Concerning teachers who teach evolution, he says they stand before their class, and "are repeating a pre-programmed monologue which they have not personally investigated or even considered independently." This sounds EXACTLY like young earth creationist teachers in young earth colleges. They have never fully investigated the evidence for an old earth, which is overwhelming. Most young earth proponents, if not all, grew up in a home where they were taught a young earth. It has been said that no person ever concluded that the earth was young, and then decided to get religion. The teaching of a young earth always came first. They are taught also to ignore any evidence to the

contrary. In effect, they are under the influence of Morton's Demon (see [www.answersincreation.org/mortond.htm](http://www.answersincreation.org/mortond.htm)).

Moving on, pages 20-21 present no problems for most old earth creationists, as we can agree with his words. At the bottom of page 21, he claims that there is not one example of genuine evolution that can be demonstrated. Evolutionists disagree. For example see these articles...

29+ Evidences for Macroevolution

<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/comdesc/>

Some More Observed Speciation Events

<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/speciation.html>

Macroevolution Rebuttal

<http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CB/CB901.html>

Sheffield continues on with an assault on naturalistic evolution, from page 22 to 24. He presents no problems here for any old earth believers. On page 24, he lists a hypocritical claim. He says, "Sadly, it usually means that the past generation relied on the "professionals" to do their study of the Bible..." He is saying this, in an effort to paint some Christians, who hold to a view other than young earth creationism, have given up their "thinking" skills, and blindly accept what these professionals have said. This is a perfect description of young earth creationists! Most never study science to examine if it is true...they blindly accept the teachings from the pulpit. They blindly trust these young earth "professionals" despite the fact that they are mostly wrong. He goes on to say, "Even though they may truly be saved, they have never grown spiritually." This shot in the dark is far from the truth. There are millions of mature Christians who believe in an old earth, defying his words. Such empty claims are foolishness.

Overall, this introductory section of the chapter has spoken about atheistic, naturalistic evolution. No valid critiques of old earth Christians are presented.

### **Creation or Evolution? (Page 25)**

He starts off arguing against taking Genesis as allegory. I agree with him in this, as I am a literalist old earth believer. However, if one wants to take it as allegory, they are free to do so. He moves on to a critique of science, saying that "When someone looks at an old bone and presumes to comment on the origins of man, he is not speaking as a scientist." Sheffield just alienated and insulted the scientific community. No wonder young earth creationists have a difficult time reaching scientists with the Gospel! Scientists generally laugh at the conclusions of young earth creationists...and rightly so. YECs do not have an understanding of what science is. In the situation above, Sheffield says he is "speaking as a philosopher, not a scientist." Dating a bone is a very scientific field, involving several different methods. There is nothing philosophical about it. Of course, YECs MUST find a way to criticize the work, since it comes to a conclusion that is contrary to their young earth theory. Insulting scientists is usually not very conducive if one wants to convert them to Christianity.

He mentions that 49 states require the teaching of biological evolution. He goes on to say there are only two possibilities for the origin of the universe...creation or evolution. He moves on to break the evolutionists into three divisions., the first being atheistic evolutionists. He quotes from Carl Baugh in this paragraph...and this makes me cautious of the remainder of the book. Carl Baugh, a well-known young earth creationist from Texas, is shown to have fabricated data and faked artifacts to support a young earth. If Sheffield relies on him for his data, he is on very shaky ground. For more, see the Answers in Genesis article on Baugh, which is posted on the TalkOrigins.org website (<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/paluxy/whatbau.html>).

Concerning teaching of evolution in schools, I have no problem with evolution being taught. How else is one to understand evolution, and whether or not it is right, unless one has studied it. Sheffield goes on, using the first law of thermodynamics to say evolutionists must ignore it...but his "simplistic view" of the law does not hold water, nor does he explain it further to justify the claim. Again, he claims evolutionists are not scientists...the process of evolution cannot be observed anywhere. Check out the three links above to see evolution in process.

Then he really puts his foot in his mouth. He says "Contrary to evolutionary theories, irrefutable proof of man's existence alongside the dinosaurs is being unearthed." He goes on to mention footprints of man and dinosaurs together. If you read the Answers in Genesis rebuttal to Carl Baugh, you understand the footprint claim was a hoax. Answers in Genesis even lists this as an argument that creationists should not use ([answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/dont\\_use.asp](http://answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/dont_use.asp)). This claim lets me know that Sheffield is a firm believer in Baugh's fraudulent claims. To read a thorough rebuttal of these so-called footprints, see <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/paluxy.html>. The only way anyone can accept dinosaur and man footprints together is to "blindly" accept the teachings of YEC "professionals." Unfortunately, it is apparent that Sheffield has never investigated the evidence for himself...and he is guilty of the same thing he accuses evolutionists of.

Sheffield goes into a one page discussion of Darwin on page 30. Nothing of significance here. On page 31, he goes into the Second Law of Thermodynamics, an often misunderstood law. He says for evolution to work, the law must actually be reversed! Again, he is blindly accepting the teachings of so-called young earth professionals, who truly misrepresent this Law. For more, see:

<http://home.att.net/~jamspsu84/ttocentropy.html>

<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/thermo/probability.html>

From there, he moves on to biogenesis. For a simple rebuttal see <http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CB/CB000.html>.

The second group which he divides evolutionists into is labeled agnostic evolutionists (Page 32). There are no problems with this short description. The third group he addresses is the Theistic Evolutionists. His first claim is that they take Genesis as allegory. While this is true of some, there are also those Theistic Evolutionists who are literalists. There is no reason why a person cannot interpret Genesis literally, with evolution, in the same way that Progressive Creationists do.

The main argument he uses against Theistic Evolution is the rapid appearance of life forms during the Cambrian period. I agree, this does provide problems for the evolutionary model. Evolutionists do have a counter argument, which sounds reasonable. It can be read at <http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CC/CC300.html>. I leave this issue up to the reader to decide.

Another issue raised by Sheffield is the seemingly impossible formation of the first life form from the primordial soup. To read the evolutionist response to this claim, see [http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CB/CB010\\_2.html](http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CB/CB010_2.html).

He calls Theistic Evolution the most dangerous of the three forms of evolution. He says it is a rejection of the words of Scripture in favor of human understanding. For Sheffield and other young earth creationists, though, it really isn't a matter of it being in favor of human understanding. The real issue is that it is contrary to their "human understanding" of a young earth. I can look at the inerrant Word, and see evolution as a possibility. It's not about rejecting Scripture...it's about interpreting Scripture, which is what all of us, including young earthers, must do. He makes the claim, "Clear Biblical statements concerning the creation which scientific laws and unquestionable archeological discoveries verify cannot be reconciled with the evolutionary hypothesis without distorting and denying both Biblical and scientific truth." He provides no statements or facts to back up this false claim. I have seen nothing that would contradict an interpretation of the Bible and evolution together...no Biblical passages, no scientific observations, and no archeological information. All claims made by creationists have been answered by evolutionists. I'm not saying they are right...that's for you to decide. However, if you want to believe God used evolution...go right ahead...there are no valid reasons to prevent you from holding such a belief.

### **Big Bang, Or a Bigger God? (Page 35)**

Sheffield's view of the Big Bang is a bit simple. He critiques it based on a report on the TV show Good Morning America, where a scientist talked about the age of the universe being 13.7 billion years. Apparently, the scientist mentioned this assumed a constant rate of expansion, something that we now know to be improbable. Sheffield makes the claim that the Big Bang theory has many flaws. Sure it does...that's why its a theory, and not fact. However, as is typical with young earth claims, scientists have answered the claims, showing that the young earth arguments are without merit. Other than Sheffield's analogy to a car, he gives no evidence of these so-called flaws. To see some of these answered claims, see <http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/list.html#CE400>.

From here Sheffield goes into a brief discussion of "in the beginning." He supplements this with a personal story. After the story, he says that "All evolutionary theories must finally arrive at that inexplicable uncaused "First Cause," which somehow set everything else (including matter, space, and life) in motion." If all evolutionists accepted the Big Bang, this would be true...but not all evolutionists do. Other theories, such as Plasma cosmology and the steady-state model, both hypothesize an evolving universe without beginning or end. In these theories, you don't need a "First Cause."

## **The Trinity in the Creation (Page 40)**

Not much here of significance for the age of the earth debate. He does say that it requires blind faith to believe in the millions of evolutionary steps. But, with Theistic Evolution, and God involved in the process, the word "blind" disappears. With God, all things are possible...even evolution.

## **The Gap Theory (Page 42)**

For the Gap Theory, he gives several arguments against it. However, I've seen nothing that would prevent a person from holding this belief if they so choose. For an explanation of the Gap Theory, read [http://www.kjvbible.org/gap\\_theory.html](http://www.kjvbible.org/gap_theory.html).

On page 46, he says of radiometric dating, "One obvious problem with this method is that it begins with the assumption that the rock strata in question was pure uranium when it was formed." Reading this, one would assume that a layer of sandstone, composed of individual grains of quartz, was originally composed of nothing but uranium crystals, and then somehow these slowly degraded into quartz. I wonder how this made it past the editors at the publishing company! This shows his level of understanding of radiometric dating is quite poor.

He throws in a barb about Carbon-14, and how water leeches out Carbon-14, rendering it useless. He fails to mention that scientists can make adjustments for this leeching in their equations. These calibrations, which account for contamination and leeching, eliminate this argument.

He mentions the Canopy Theory as giving ample explanations for a petroleum deposits and rock strata. The canopy theory has fallen on hard times in young earth creationism, however. It is on the list of arguments that young earth creationists should not use, published by Answers in Genesis. Again, this is showing his preference for using arguments from questionable sources, such as Carl Baugh and Kent Hovind.

He uses the example of Mt Saint Helens, saying that this "real science does not support the old earth assumptions, but rather the Biblical model of a young earth." Since there are no real scientists switching to young earth creationism as a result of Mt Saint Helens, I wonder where he gets the data for this claim.

Old earth creationism does not say it takes millions of years for "all rock layers to form." Within the uniformitarian model, catastrophic events occur. Mount Saint Helens presents nothing out of the ordinary. We see old evidences for volcanic eruptions millions of years ago, just like we observed at Mount Saint Helens.

He goes on to compare Mt. Saint Helens with the Grand Canyon, but this is like comparing apples and oranges. Mt. Saint Helens is a volcanic system, and the layers of the Grand Canyon are non-volcanic. Yes, mudslides that occurred as a result of Mt. Saint Helens are "sedimentary," but the layers of the Grand Canyon were not formed as a result of a volcano.

He says there is a growing number of scientists who believe a young earth. I agree...as I've stated before, they are home-grown. They are taught the earth is young from an early age, and are brainwashed and incapable of even considering an alternative view (see Morton's Demon for an explanation of how they ignore the evidence). Sheffield says the secular media ignores them...and rightly so! Their claims are based on

the presupposition of a young earth, with absolutely no credible evidence to back up their claims. Sheffield says the science proves a young earth...only if you have young earth prejudices to begin with.

Next, he uses the ill-fated receding moon argument (from Hovind). To read why this argument is faulty, see <http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CE/CE110.html>.

The last part is a call to simply believe the Bible...something many old earth creationists do. You can believe the earth is old, and believe in an inerrant, infallible Bible, literally interpreted. He goes on to argue that the main reason for evolution is to deny God. For atheistic evolution, this may ring true. But again, you can accept both God and evolution, and believe in an inerrant, infallible Word.

Overall, Sheffield has not presented any evidence for a young earth. Judging by the arguments he uses, he is a disciple of Kent Hovind and Carl Baugh, two creationists that even the young earth creationist organization Answers in Genesis do not take seriously.

I am a bit surprised, however, that Sheffield did not attack progressive creationism. Attacking progressive creationists, and Dr. Hugh Ross in particular, is "the in thing" within young earth creationism. Perhaps he will do so in future chapters.