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## INTRODUCTION

### WHY IS THIS BOOK NEEDED?

**D**r. Hugh Norman Ross (b. 1945) is a Canadian astronomer who is now best known for his ostensibly Christian apologetics ministry, Reasons to Believe, which is based in California. This ministry purports to give Christians scientific evidence to support the Bible and answer anti-Christian arguments by skeptics. This ministry coordinates his many speaking engagements and publishes a newsletter called *Facts and Faith*. Ross has written a number of popular-level books on the Bible, science, and apologetics (see pages 27–28 for abbreviations).

Surely, Christians should support Ross's professed aim to reconcile the Bible and science, shouldn't they? Especially with so much propaganda claiming that science and Christianity are opposed. Ross is even a staunch opponent of Darwinian evolution and proclaims there is irrefutable scientific evidence for a creator. Further, Ross claims to believe that Genesis is literal history, not myth or allegory, and that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. It is not surprising then that many Christian leaders have written glowing endorsements of his ideas, and NavPress has published his books.

Sadly, some people endorsed Ross's books without even reading them thoroughly, but as a favor to friends. This is a most unfortunate, if not irresponsible, use of prestige with the Christian public. Some noted Christian leaders, out of friendship to the editor and also to the pastor of Dr. Ross, recommended his book *Creation and Time* without really having worked through its content. Thus, their stance on creation is not necessarily that of his book. One of them, before January 1998, withdrew his endorsement of it.

Ross was also featured in the June 2003 cover story of the leading Pentecostal magazine *Charisma*, by Andy Butcher, *Charisma's* senior writer and news director.<sup>1</sup>

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1. A. Butcher, "He Sees God in the Stars," *Charisma* (June 2003): p. 38–44.

J. Sarfati "Shame on *Charisma!*" <[www.answersingenesis.org/rosspc](http://www.answersingenesis.org/rosspc)>, May 29, 2003.

However, when Ross's claims are examined, we find that many times he does not allow Scripture to speak for itself, but, rather, reinterprets Scripture in line with secular "science." So while Ross proclaims he is "anti-evolution," in the sense that he denies that one kind of creature can change into another, he accepts almost every other aspect of evolutionary "science," even when it disagrees with the plain teaching of Genesis. And while Ross professes to believe that Genesis is literal history, this history seems vastly different from the literal text. As shown in the table on the following page, his view is often called "progressive creation," and can be contrasted with the views of Answers in Genesis, which we believe are derived from a careful and hermeneutically consistent reading of the Bible. His own preferred term for himself, "day-age creationist," explicitly reflects the second line in the table. This will be shown in an addendum to this introduction, which is our comment on the differences *as understood by Ross himself*.

Others have written in response to Ross, including Mark Van Bebber's and Paul Taylor's excellent point-by-point rebuttal of *Creation and Time*,<sup>2</sup> but for some reason it hasn't received the attention it deserves. Ross has never answered the main points raised, and still repeats the same errors. The best Reasons to Believe could do was publish a somewhat weak review by a political scientist, which basically attacked the messenger rather than evaluating the message.<sup>3</sup>

Some of Ross's books have been the subject of public reviews,<sup>4</sup> but they also seem to have had minimal effect on Ross's teachings, in the sense that he keeps repeating the same errors. Hence, it was necessary to write a comprehensive book to show that the propositions on the left side of the table on the following page are simply not possible to reconcile with the Bible, and that there is no justification in true science for them either.

### Ross Overextends His Areas of Competence

While one can appreciate Dr. Ross's enthusiasm in debate, it unfortunately predisposes him at times to make pronouncements in areas where he lacks expertise. This can have an unhelpful affect on Christians who assume that he is really knowledgeable in all the areas he so willingly addresses.

For instance, in arguing against the young-earth view, Dr. Ross at times resorts to technicalities of the Hebrew language. But this has landed him in trouble more than once, as when he tried to discredit the common biblical creationist identification of

2. M. Van Bebber and P.S. Taylor, *Creation and Time: A Report on the Progressive Creationist Book by Hugh Ross*, Eden Productions, Mesa, AZ, 1994, online at <[www.christiananswers.net/paradise/ctb-alt.html](http://www.christiananswers.net/paradise/ctb-alt.html)>.

3. M. Clark, "A Review of Mark Van Bebber's and Paul S. Taylor's *A Report on the Progressive Creationist Book by Hugh Ross*," <[www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/review\\_progcreat.shtml?main](http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/review_progcreat.shtml?main)>, May 23, 2003.

4. J.D. Sarfati, "Expos of NavPress's New Hugh Ross Book: *The Genesis Question*," *TJ* 13(2):22–30 (1999); <[www.answersingenesis.org/ross\\_GQ](http://www.answersingenesis.org/ross_GQ)>.

D. Faulkner, "The Dubious Apologetics of Hugh Ross," *TJ*, 13(2):52–60 (1999); <[www.answersingenesis.org/ross\\_apol](http://www.answersingenesis.org/ross_apol)>.

PROGRESSIVE CREATION	BIBLICAL CREATION
The earth and universe are billions of years old.	The earth and universe are about 6,000 years old.
The days of creation were really vast ages.	The days of creation were ordinary days.
The sun and stars were created before the earth, and merely “appeared” to a hypothetical observer on earth on the fourth “day.”	The sun and stars were created on day 4, after the earth (created on day 1).
The seventh day is still continuing, supported by the alleged “fact” of no new species arising in the last 10,000 years.	The seventh day was also about 24 hours long. Some populations become reproductively isolated (unable to interbreed) today, which, <i>by definition</i> , means that a new species is formed.
Animals were eating each other, dying from natural disasters, and suffering from many diseases, for millions of years before mankind existed.	Creation was originally “very good,” while death, suffering, and disease ultimately are the result of Adam’s sin, which resulted in God’s curse upon His creation.
God created almost all species separately.	God created comparatively few “kinds,” and many “species” are the results of non-information-increasing diversification of the created gene pools, especially after the Flood.
God created Adam 60,000 to 10,000 years ago [this range incorporates the possibility that Adam post-dates Aboriginals’ arrival in Australia, “dated” 40,000 years ago]. Neandertals were not true humans but soulless hominids.	God created Adam about 6,000 years ago. Neandertals, like <i>Homo erectus</i> , are fossils of true humans who descended from Adam, and likely lived shortly after Babel.
The order in the fossils is a record of distinct ages with vastly different creatures existing, all the results of separate creative acts by God over periods of time.	Much of the fossil “order” reflects the different stages of burial in a worldwide Flood and subsequent local catastrophes, as well as different ecosystems.
Noah’s flood was restricted to the Mesopotamian river valley.	Noah’s flood covered the entire globe.
God had to intervene supernaturally to produce the different racial characteristics, to help the people separate <i>at</i> Babel.	Adam and Eve had the genetic information to give rise to all the different “races” (people groups) today, allowing for non-information-gaining mutations. The racial characteristics arose after small people groups became separated <i>after</i> Babel.

*behemoth* in Job 40:15 ff. with a sauropod, because he believes the dinosaurs became extinct 65 million years ago. Ross writes (*The Genesis Question*, p. 48 1st ed.; corrected in 2nd ed.): “*The Hebrew word for “behemoth” appears in its plural form, behema. . . .*” However, even beginners in Hebrew know that “-a” is often a feminine singular and “-oth” is a feminine plural.

So Ross got it back-to-front: *behema* is the singular form, while *behemoth* is grammatically plural. It is a figure of speech known as an *intensive plural* or *plural of majesty*, where “the referent is a singular individual, which is, however, so thoroughly characterized by the qualities of the noun that a plural is used,”<sup>5</sup> “beast of beasts.” The context indicates that *behemoth* is the largest beast God made. And Job 40:17 says, “*His tail sways like a cedar,*” which certainly doesn’t fit Ross’s suggestion of a hippopotamus (unless the reference was to a bonsai cedar, maybe!).

### SCOPE OF THIS BOOK

This critique concentrates mostly on Ross’s books, rather than his audio recordings and website, since books are an incontrovertible record of his teachings and have presumably been double-checked. Conversely, there is more chance of making a mere slip in speaking, and internet articles are very open to change in content and address.

The main exceptions are:

- Dr. Ross’s widely publicized debate with Dr. Kent Hovind on the John Ankerberg Show in October 2000. I critiqued this in detail at <[www.answersingenesis.org/ross\\_hovind](http://www.answersingenesis.org/ross_hovind)>, and some of the points are relevant to this book in several places.
- *Life and Death in Eden, The Biblical and Scientific Evidence for Animal Death before the Fall*, 2001, audio cassette series. This is described as a “round table discussion by Ross and his Reasons to Believe staffers: theologian Kenneth Samples; biologist Fazale Rana; Marj Harman, described as a lay apologist; and Krista Bontrager as moderator and theologian.” Chapter 6 shows the flaws in this.
- “RTB Critique of RATE Project,” Reasons to Believe radio broadcast, September 18, 2003, 6 to 8 p.m. Pacific time. Moderator: Krista Bontrager; studio participants: Hugh Ross, Fazale Rana, and Marge Harmon; telephone participant: Roger Wiens. Archived at: <[www.oneplace.com/ministries/creation\\_update/Archives.asp](http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/creation_update/Archives.asp)> Chapters 11 and 12 deal with the mistakes in this program.

Also, we note the Latin saying *scripta manent*, meaning, “What is written, stands,” with the implication, “unless rescinded, equally in writing.” Therefore, this book will hold Ross to errors in his books unless retracted in writing. It would be inadequate for him to claim that he has retracted a claim or answered a point in some audio recording somewhere, and demand that his opponents wade through hours of talks by him or his assistants.

5. B.K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), p. 122.

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## BOOK OUTLINE

The reason this book starts with the topic of the authority of the Bible (chapter 1) is that the most fundamental disagreement between young-earth creationists (YECs) and Ross and his followers (and really all other varieties of theistic evolutionists and old-earth creationists) is *authority*. AiG maintains that God's infallible Word, the Bible, must be our ultimate authority. **This means that Scripture must judge man's fallible theories about the past, not vice versa.** It is our contention that Ross elevates "science" to the level of Scripture, and, in practice, puts science above Scripture by reinterpreting Scripture to fit his idea of science, all the time claiming that his approach is scriptural. So the first chapter explains why Scripture should be authoritative, and why Ross's approach is inconsistent with Scripture. It also documents how evangelicals who disagree with 24-hour creation days acknowledge that the text teaches this, but disagree primarily because they are intimidated by so-called "science," which they believe teaches differently. Science should not be dismissed, but it must be kept in its proper ministerial role as a servant to the Bible, and never placed in a magisterial role over and above the Bible.

Once the Bible is established as foundational, the next step is to determine what it teaches on the areas of contention. Then it's possible to show how true science can illuminate and clarify some teachings. But this can never mean reinterpreting the Bible as the opposite of what it says and how it has always been understood.

Therefore, chapter 2 covers the days of creation, showing that they were 24 hours long. It addresses a number of objections, as well as briefly dealing with other compromise views: the gap theory and framework hypothesis. I also explain the correct meaning and application of "literal" interpretation, showing that Ross is using a very non-literal meaning of "literal"!

Chapter 3 shows how the overwhelming view of the majority of exegetes throughout church history has been that the days were 24 hours long, and that even those who disagreed believed that the earth was less than 6,000 years old at the time of writing. Long-age interpretations of the Bible arose only after these ideas became popular in "science" and conservative exegetes tried to bring Scripture into line. But liberals, with no motivation to defend the authority of Scripture, kept the traditional interpretation, mistakenly believing that it was proof of error in the Bible.

Chapter 4 is a short one, showing that the order of creation in Genesis cannot be reconciled with long-age beliefs. In particular, this deals with the kinds of creatures created on days 3, 5, and 6 (including dinosaurs) and the astronomical objects created on day 4. Then we address Ross's restrictions on the types of creatures created during creation week, and his "order" of creation of creatures and heavenly bodies. Indeed, for an earlier influential day-age advocate, Davis Young, this was a major factor in his repudiation of the day-age view in favor of one that disregards Genesis as historical at all.

Chapter 5 covers the big-bang theory, which has always been foundational to Ross's biblical exegesis. A number of scientific problems for the big bang are analyzed,

and evolutionary theories of galaxy, star, and planet formation are found severely wanting. Also, Ross's apologetics with the big-bang and "string theory" are found problematic, as well as unnecessary. In their place, alternative apologetics schemes are provided. Finally, alternative cosmological models are presented that line up with the Bible.

Chapter 6 is about the origin of sin and death. This shows that the Bible teaches that death and suffering began with the Fall. Also, this death must include physical death, not just "spiritual death." Some of the passages explicitly refer only to human death, but even this is a problem because evolutionists "date" fossils of modern humans as earlier than Ross's dates for Adam. But the death of vertebrate animals, classified as *nephesh chayyah* along with humans, also dates from the Fall. This is shown by the original vegetarian diet and the fact that this will be restored. The biblical teaching of sin-death causality is, with pun intended, the death knell for any long-age compromise.

Chapter 7 outlines the biblical creation model in detail, explaining the "created kinds." This also exposes much of the misinformation by both evolutionists and Ross that any variation or "speciation" is evolution. The vital concept of *genetic information* is the key — evolution from goo to you via the zoo requires an *increase* in information, while variation and speciation are the result of *sorting* and *loss* of information. Therefore, this refutes Ross's charge that creationists believe in super-rapid evolution.

Chapter 8 shows that the flood of Genesis was global, and how this is the only possible understanding from Scripture. Ross's ostensibly biblical arguments are refuted, as are supposedly scientific arguments. In fact, the geological record makes more sense if we interpret it as the result of recent catastrophic processes. Ross believes in a local Flood in Mesopotamia, but this is shown to be unworkable because of the nature of the Genesis account, as well as the fact that the Mesopotamian geography cannot support a huge wall of water for a year. The feasibility of the ark's stability and ability to hold all land vertebrate kinds is demonstrated. Ross's arguments about the ark's cargo in a global Flood scenario, mostly identical to those raised in the past by unbelievers, are shown to be straw men. Ross's errors here follow from his errors about the biblical kinds discussed in the previous chapter. This, in turn, arises largely from his belief that the seventh day is still continuing.

Chapter 9 outlines the history of mankind according to the Bible, starting from the creation of Adam and Eve about 6,000 years ago. This date is shown by the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11, which are shown to have no gaps, and the fact that Jesus said that humans were male and female "from the beginning of creation" (Mark 10:6) shows that this was close to the creation of the universe. Then Adam fell and brought death into the world, and his progeny descended into such depths of evil that they were judged by a worldwide Flood. The Fall and Flood are covered in previous chapters. Noah and his family were saved on the ark, and their descendants disobeyed God's command to fill the earth, so their languages were confused at Babel.

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