

*"For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water" (II Peter 3:5).*

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## WILLINGLY IGNORANT

by Henry M. Morris\*

As creationists repeatedly encounter the refusal of our secular evolutionists even to consider the evidence for special creation and against evolution, we are tempted to apply to them such pejoratives as "intolerance," "narrow-mindedness," "bigotry," and the like. But the pungent phrase of the apostle Peter is probably the most appropriate of all—"they willingly are ignorant."

It is worth knowing, however, that evolutionists can be almost as stubborn against their fellow evolutionists as they are against creationists when these other evolutionists come up with novel theories of their own. We remember the bitter war of words between neo-Darwinist Richard Dawkins and the late punctuationalist Stephen Jay Gould for example.

There is hardly a more doctrinaire evolutionist anywhere than Lynn Margulis, yet listen to her complaint.

More and more, like the monasteries of the Middle Ages, today's universities and professional societies guard their knowledge. Collusively, the university biology curriculum, the textbook publishers, the National Science Foundation review committees, the Graduate Record Examiners, and the various microbiological, evolutionary, and zoological societies map out domains of the known

and knowable; they distinguish required from forbidden knowledge, subtly punishing the trespassers with rejection and oblivion; they . . . determine who is permitted to know and just what it is that he or she may know.<sup>1</sup>

Margulis was fuming about the difficulty she was having in getting her concepts of evolutionary mechanisms considered. She goes on to complain that

. . . if an individual with ambition to study nature rejects neo-Darwinist biology in today's ambience, he becomes a threat to his own means of livelihood . . .<sup>2</sup>

Such prejudice is found not only in biology. Those physicists who question relativistic physics or quantum mechanics or the Big Bang are all but ostracized by their physics colleagues. Dr. Frank J. Tipler, a recognized world-class authority in these subjects, and a professor of physics at the University of New Orleans, has noted also that:

The most radical scientific theory with religious implications is Intelligent Design. It is impossible to get any member of the National Academy of Sciences to consider it seriously.<sup>3</sup>

Tipler has written a book entitled, *The*

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*Physics of Immortality*, which admits the possibility of god (not the Biblical God, of course, but a sort of relativistic god), and this has been unacceptable to the physics establishment. He notes, significantly, that over 90% of the distinguished physicists in the National Academy are admitted atheists.

Clearly, the scientific community is not open to any evidence or any theory that might even hint that God really exists and might actually act in the physical universe.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Tipler has been particularly exercised by the standard “peer review” process used by publications in deciding whether to publish a paper or by granting agencies in deciding whether to finance a research proposal. In his critique of this process, he makes the following bitter comments:

Today, the refereeing process works primarily to enforce orthodoxy. I shall offer evidence that “peer” review is *not* peer review: the referee is quite often not as intellectually able as the author whose work he judges. We have pygmies standing in judgment on giants.<sup>5</sup>

And he does, indeed, offer much evidence to support this claim. For example, he cites several winners of Nobel prizes whose prize-winning papers had initially been rejected by this peer-review process.

Another evolutionary physicist who has had many problems getting his theories recognized is João Margueijo, who is just recently being able to publish some of his evidence that the velocity of light was greater in the past. He has written the following.

As an individual you are judged by how many papers you publish, where you publish them, their quality, and how often they are subsequently cited. But more importantly,

publication is part and parcel of the fact that scientists, who tend to live on grant money, are obligated to make their findings and ideas available to others. They will not get their share of funding unless they can show a solid publication record.<sup>6</sup>

His bitterness is reflected in the following:

Referee reports are often empty of scientific content and reflect nothing but the author’s social standing, or their good or bad relations with the referee. . . . To cap it all, editors can be totally illiterate.<sup>7</sup>

With respect to our particular concerns as Bible-believing creationists, Tipler recognizes (though he himself is not a Biblical creationist in our context) that:

The most radical ideas are those that are perceived to support religion, specifically Judaism and Christianity.<sup>8</sup>

What prospect, then, do we creationists have of getting true scientific creationism a hearing in any of the standard scientific journals?

Not much, obviously. We have never been able so far even to get an article accepted by such popular journals as *National Geographic* or *Reader’s Digest*, whose editors have made it clear to us that they are committed to evolutionism.

Creationists have been confined so far to publication in our own journals, even though our articles are peer-reviewed and genuinely scientific. The now-famous statement by Harvard’s Richard Lewontin that “we cannot allow a divine foot in the door” reinforces our oft-repeated complaint that creation cannot get a fair hearing in the marketplace of ideas.

We could cite innumerable examples. My own experiences have confirmed this closed door many times. For example, the book *The Genesis Flood* received considerable attention in the scientific world

and has resulted in making creationists out of many evolutionists. Before publication, we had it “peer-reviewed” by at least eighteen scientists plus many theologians and Bible scholars.

Yet, when I was at Virginia Tech (Head of the Civil Engineering Department there), the administration would not allow me even to list that book or any of my articles promoting scientific creationism on my official staff resume (fortunately, I had a goodly number of engineering publications also, and they were quite willing for these to be listed).

Another remarkable insight to this situation was obtained when Dr. Tom Barnes and I tried to find a publisher many years ago for the newly completed high school biology textbook produced by the Creation Research Society. The book had been written by a committee of highly competent Ph.D. creationist biologists and experienced high school biology teachers. (Dr. Barnes had been Chairman of the Committee and I was Society President.) But the fifteen leading publishers of high school textbooks whom we approached would not even look at the manuscript!

The following admission by the editor of *Research News* is very illuminating, as an answer to those who are continually rebuking creationists for their failure to publish scientific articles on creationism in the standard scientific literature.

In my editorial judgment, the collection of ideas known as “scientific creationism” (which is not the same as intelligent design) lacks the credibility to justify publishing any submissions that we get from its adherents.<sup>9</sup>


Many more examples and illustrations could be added, if space permitted. I have had technical articles requested by technical journals, only to have them rejected when actually submitted. For example,

my small book, *The Scientific Case for Creation*, was rejected by a scientific society which had originally requested it for publication. The book was later published also in Russia, while communism still reigned there, and played a significant part in opening the Russian science establishment to considering creationism.

The so-called National Center for Science Education was established for the very purpose of keeping creationism out of the schools, and it is still quite active and successful. Many of their scientists have become aware of the lack of any legitimate evidence for macro-evolution, but they are still as committed to it as ever.

In addition to Peter’s attribution of willful ignorance to their attitude, the apostle Paul has also affirmed that those who reject or ignore the great evidence of creation in the physical universe are “without excuse” (Romans 1:20). The evidences for God and the truth of His Word are very, very strong.

## Footnotes

1. Lynn Margulis, “Big Trouble in Biology,” chapter 20 in *Slanted Truths* (Ed. by Lynn Margulis and Dorian Sagan. New York: Springer-Verlag, 1997), p. 265.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
3. Frank J. Tipler, “Refereed Journals: Do They Insure Quality or Enforce Orthodoxy?” (ISCID Archiv. June 30, 2003), p. 8.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
6. João Magueijo, *Faster than the Spread of Light* (Cambridge, Mass. Perseus Publishing Co., 2003), p. 183.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 217–218.
8. Tipler, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
9. Karl Gilberson in *Research News* (July/August 2002), as quoted by Kevin Anderson in article “Intentional Editorial Censorship,” *Creation Matters* (Creation Research Society, May/June 2002), p. 8. 

## CAN THE USSHER CHRONOLOGY BE TRUSTED?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.

Up until fairly recently, nearly all printings of the King James Bible included dates in the marginal notes which helped place Biblical events in their chronological context. Using this as a guide we can see that “God created the heaven and the earth” in 4004 B.C.; the Flood covered the Earth in 2348 B.C.; the Exodus occurred in 1491 B.C.; David became King of Israel in 1056 B.C.; and the Nation of Judah was carried into captivity in 593 B.C. Obviously, the numbers are helpful in understanding the sequence and timing of events, but where did they come from, and are they reliable?

The chronology was derived by Archbishop James Ussher, and first published in A.D. 1650. Born in Ireland, he rose rapidly in the ranks of the Anglican Church, renowned for his scholarship, mastery of Semitic and classical languages, and voluminous knowledge of history. Widely published on many subjects, his most important work was “*The Annals of the World*,” which covered and calendarized all important historical events, beginning at creation and extending to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

In compiling this history, Ussher made use of extensive collections of documents in England and throughout Europe. Some of these were first-hand accounts of events which were never widely circulated and have since disappeared.

His primary interest was Biblical history and how secular events impacted it, but his *Annals* included much information about early Romans, Greeks, Persians, and Egyptians, which was never published elsewhere. For centuries *Annals* was a primary source document. Part of his work was a chronology of histori-


cal events referenced to Biblical chronology, which he accepted as authoritative.

The Biblical text doesn’t always use a linear time-line spanning all of its episodes, but it does give much chronological and sequential information linked to events which we can absolutely date from secular history. Ussher chose the known date of Nebuchadnezzar’s death as his starting point, and worked forward and backward from there, using the Biblical data as his infallible guide.

The calculations are not as straightforward in the Bible as one might hope. Thankfully, the Bible gives several large time spans, which bridge the uncertainties.

Actually, the Biblical data are the only reliable data for the Patriarchal periods, as archeological finds are notoriously sparse and vague. On the other hand, adopting the Biblical time scale allows us to understand archaeological remains more completely.

While Ussher had access to documents we no longer have, numerous discoveries have come to light since Ussher, which enhance our understanding. But none of them change his conclusions to any great extent. There have been over 100 attempts to establish a chronology since Ussher, and each one is slightly different, but all are fairly close to his.

Bishop Ussher wrote his *Annals* in Latin, and a later English translation had numerous weaknesses. Recently ICR colleague Larry Pierce re-translated Ussher’s 1600 page tome into modern form, including more recent discoveries as footnotes. Perhaps this new work will re-establish Ussher’s chronology as a standard research tool, and for some, restore their confidence in the Biblical record. 



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