

The Beginnings Under Attack A Young Earth Book Review



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The book *The Beginnings Under Attack*, is by Bill Sheffield. The edition being reviewed is a paperback, copyright 2003, ISBN Number 0-9728899-3-0.

The purpose of this book is to address concerns that old earth creationism, in all its forms, is not consistent with the Bible. It is meant to show that young earth creationism is the only reasonable way to literally interpret Genesis. It also argues that evolution, both naturalistic and theistic, are contrary to the evidence from science and the Bible.

The acknowledgement section lets me know exactly how this book will present its arguments. The author says "It is offered neither as the work of a scientist nor a theologian, but simply as the heart cry of a believer." This statement sums up the arguments in the book...arguments from emotions, and not based on facts. The review shows this to be the case.

The forward, written by Dr. Roy Wallace, makes the claim that evolution is constantly changing, to cover past errors. He quotes from the book, which says, "As new discoveries are made, those theories must be adjusted to accommodate the new data which proves past ideas wrong." This is a wonderful description of science in action. As new data points are discovered, theories change. This is the way science is supposed to work. It means the previous theories were based on incomplete data. This is not to say that they were errors. The old theories were based on evidence available at the time. Any scientist recognizes this fundamental way in which science improves upon itself. To the outsider, such as the author, it sounds suspect...but it is a wonderful system based on changing scientific observations.

In the introduction, Sheffield says there are "unbelieving believers." He is referring to liberal scholars at institutions that deny portions of Scripture, take it as allegory, and pick and choose the parts they want to believe and discard the rest. I agree...there are many liberal theologians who have lost focus on the Word and its significance in our lives.

As an old earth creationist, and a progressive creationist, I take the Bible literally, and fully believe in an inerrant, infallible Word. Thus, Sheffield's words don't apply to progressive creationists. I realize that not all old earth creationists take the Word literally. However, there are many other old earth believers, including Gap Theorists, and some Theistic Evolutionists, who also accept a literal Genesis. We fully accept Genesis...we just don't accept the "young earth interpretation" of Genesis. We can be just as "conservative" as the author is.

It is very interesting to note that Sheffield does not address Progressive Creationism directly in this book. This shows that he really did not accomplish adequate research in writing this book. He essentially ignores half of all old earth creationists. Can young earth creationists trust someone who does not even know the materiel he is writing about?

The book reads as a heart-felt appeal to accept the Genesis account. I have no doubt that Sheffield is a sincere, committed believer. However, such things do not make one right. He frequently uses material from Mr. Kent Hovind and Mr. Carl Baugh, two creationists who are at odds with the rest of the young earth community, including Answers in Genesis (AiG). Their evidences are frequently listed on the AiG list of arguments that creationists should not use.

The claims made by Sheffield in this book are presented "as-is"...with no supporting facts or documentation. Unfortunately, this is the way many young earth creationists operate. They are expected to blindly accept the sayings of men in authority, such as Sheffield, Hovind, Baugh, and others, without questioning the validity of the statements. I think this is part of the "young earth culture." They are not supposed to question the words of pastors and other authority figures. In other words, they are gullible (easily deceived or duped; easily tricked because of being too trusting (from dictionary.com)). Don't get me wrong...young earth creationists are smart people, but they have grown up in this culture that accepts this type of behavior as the norm. If they would only examine the evidence, free from any young earth prejudices, they would see the truth.

Overall, the book presents no valid arguments in favor of a young earth. It is merely the heart-felt appeal of a man on a mission. I applaud Mr. Sheffield on his initiative, but his conclusions are based on poor science...science that he has never fully investigated by the author.

Chapter 1 – “In the Beginning”

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).

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).

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). 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/ttcentropy.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.

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.

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.

Chapter 2 – “Days of Creation”

There is nothing significant for the age debate in the introduction to this chapter.

Length of the Days (Page 52)

Sheffield uses the standard Exodus 20 argument against interpreting the days of creation as long periods. There is no reason presented here that is prohibitive of interpreting the days of Genesis as long ages...other than the fact that young earth creationists do not agree with our interpretation. Fortunately, we are all free to interpret the Bible. Sheffield says, "The question is not what the word could mean, but rather what is the original meaning." He is correct. Since no man was here until the end of Day Six, the question is what is God's view of the word day. Since God is eternal, and does not sleep, a billion years to God is the same as a second. In other words, time has no meaning to an eternal being. For our benefit, and to set the pattern for our week, God described the creation in six days. Think of it this way...since God is eternal, and does

not sleep, then midnight at each day transition means nothing...why not have a single creative "day" instead? To Him, there were no "days."

He really messes up with the claim that the word day appears 600 times, and he claims "with the exception of a few references to the "Day of the Lord" it clearly refers to a specific twenty-four hour period of time." The word "Yom" is translated to mean 12 hours, 24 hours, time (generic), week, month, year, age, ago, always, season, chronicles, continually, ever, and evermore. In fact, Yom is translated as something other than day 145 times, encompassing a time frame from 12 hours to eternity. This clearly is not a "few exceptions." For more see Word Study: Yom (www.answersincreation.org/word_study_yom.htm).

He mentions that there is another word in Hebrew for long indefinite periods of time. However, God could not give us the pattern of our work week based on indefinite periods of time. He had to use "day" to describe it to us. He then briefly touches on the young earth "ordinal number argument," that the word day, when it appears with an ordinal (first, second, etc) always represents a 24 hour day. This popular claim by young earth scholars is not held to by non-young earth scholars. It appears to be a young earth-created rule for interpretation, meant to support their cause. As it is, there is one passage, Zechariah 14:7-9, which includes an ordinal and is not 24 hours.

He then briefly visits death before sin, saying that it is inconsistent with the Bible. It is not inconsistent with the Bible...it is inconsistent with the "young earth interpretation" of the Bible. There are no problems with death before sin, and God's proclamation that creation was "very good."

Sheffield then mentions plant creation on Day Three, and the Sun creation on Day Four, saying plants could not have survived without the sun over millions of years. There is no problem with the timing of creation. The creation account is written from the point of view of an observer on the surface of the earth. One would see plant life forms first, and then once the atmosphere cleared, the sun would become directly visible to the naked eye. This order is perfectly in line with planetary formation models, and with the observed fossil record, which has simple algae as the first life forms.

He then leaves the topic of evidences, and argues from ration. He says it is impossible to believe in God and evolution. However, millions of Theistic Evolutionists prove him wrong every day! It is only impossible for a young earth creationist...naturally you cannot believe in a 6,000 year old earth and evolution.

Next Sheffield mentions I Peter 3:8, the "one day is as a thousand years" verse. He says this is very specific, meaning a day is as a thousand years...and not "a day is like eons of time." It's not about the length of time...it's the concept that counts. Time has no meaning for an eternal being.

Next, he moves on to an argument from Hosea 6:2, which mentions two days, and he relates this prophesy to the return of Christ. Coupled with the "thousand years is a day" argument, it means Christ's return is upon us, since we are almost two thousand years after Christ. He can believe this if he chooses. It has nothing to do with the age of the earth, however. From here he launches into man's interpretations and philosophies, presenting no problems from the old earth perspective.

Order of Creation (Page 57)

Sheffield says he will not attack the order of creation, since evolutionists basically have the same order as the Bible states. Interesting. Most young earth authors would argue the order is out of place with the Bible.

Day Two (Page 57)

He talks about the atmosphere, mentioning at length the Canopy theory, and quotes from Carl Baugh, a creationist with questionable credentials. As previously mentioned, the canopy theory is no longer in favor with most young earth creationists. The only ones proposing it now are Baugh and Hovind. At the end, he calls this "true science." Sheffield has now moved from theology to comedy! For more on the canopy theory, see these articles.

Flood From Vapor Canopy

(<http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CH/CH401.html>)

The Pre-Flood Canopy Would Have Made the World Edenic

(<http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CH/CH310.html>)

[The Pre-Flood Canopy Would Have Extended Human Lifetimes](http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CH/CH311.html)

(<http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CH/CH311.html>)

Day Three (Page 60)

This section contains a few arguments mentioned in the first chapter. He goes on to mention that truth will not contradict other truth, something that I agree with. However, the definition of "truth" is not something we would agree on, as I see the old earth as being true, and he the young.

Day Four (Page 61)

As with day three, he mentions that trees were created with fully ripened fruit on them. This is referring to fiat creation, instantaneous creation of objects immediately after God's proclamation. When God said, "Let there be...", the object appeared immediately. Progressive creationists will have no problems with this. For theistic evolutionists, there is no indication of the amount of time from the "Let there be.." statement, and the appearance of the object. Thus, it could be said to have been instantaneous...or it could be millions of years. As such, this argument presents no problems for theistic evolutionists.

I mostly agree with his moon argument, however, he uses Job 25:5 to say the Bible says the moon did not create its own light. It says nothing of the sort. The verse is comparing the moon's brightness to God's brightness. It has nothing to do with the origin of the moon's light.

He then moves on to use the moon dust argument, another argument that has been discredited, and which Answers in Genesis has on their list of arguments creationists should not use (answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/dont_use.asp). Again, Sheffield is relying on false claims from Hovind and Baugh. For a detailed article on moon dust, see this Answers in Genesis article ([answersingenesis.org/home/area/magazines/tj/moondust\(v7n1\)/moondust.asp](http://answersingenesis.org/home/area/magazines/tj/moondust(v7n1)/moondust.asp)).

It is interesting that he says Voyager II, launched in 1977, "...traveled through our universe, passing stars and planets..." Noticed it passed stars (plural). No man-made spacecraft has ever passed a star other than our own sun. In fact, Voyager II is still inside the solar system. Such is the quality of Sheffield's scientific observations.

Day Five (Page 63)

Nothing significant here in Sheffield's words. He makes mention that these creations did not evolve from previously existing ones. The Scriptures do not rule this out, however. As stated before, the length of time between "Let there be..." and the created object is not given.

Day Six (Page 64)

He starts out with a short discussion on the "after his kind" statement contained in Day Six, but he goes nowhere with this statement, making no claims.

He then goes on to the Glen Rose, Texas arguments of Carl Baugh and Kent Hovind, which have been thoroughly refuted, and which Answers in Genesis says not to use as an argument for creationism (see answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/dont_use.asp). To read a thorough rebuttal of these so-called footprints, see <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/paluxy.html>.

Sheffield goes on to mention that we all come from a common ancestor, and mankind originated from a common location. This presents no problems for old earth creationists, as most believe this.

He briefly touches on the transitional lifeform argument. For a rebuttal of this, see Transitional Fossils (www.answersincreation.org/transitional_fossils.htm).

We then come to his claim about science not being science if it changes it's conclusion about something. This is the nature of science...as new facts appear, theories change. This is a wonderful process, and in no way justifies the calling of a prior theory as "non-science." What we have here is Sheffield's true feelings exposed. He does not trust science, even if he were hit over the head with a 2x4, he would claim the 2x4 did not exist. Such is the young earth mindset...even in the face of overwhelming evidence, they do not believe it or trust it. They are "willingly ignorant" of the evidence for an old earth. More more on this ignorance of the evidence, see Morton's Demon (www.answersincreation.org/mortond.htm).

He quotes the example of Richard Dawkins, who cannot come up with one piece of evidence for adding new information to DNA. Evolution, by its very nature, is a slow process. It is not surprising that nobody has observed this, considering the study of Evolution is only 150 years old, and considering the study of DNA is just older than 50 years. The lack of evidence for one claim does not provide proof for an alternate claim.

Sheffield devotes just over a page to the issue of man's creation, but mentions no issues concerning the age of the earth. He then mentions the use of the word "replenish" in Genesis 1:28, and argues it should be "to fill." This is only an issue for Gap Theorists, and then it isn't an issue, as they can do without this argument and still believe in the Gap Theory.

Next he mentions that between the creation and the Flood, mankind were vegetarians. He gives no proof of this. True, man was told in the Garden to eat plants, but that does not mean they were vegetarians. There was no "prohibition" against eating meat...just a declaration to eat plants. I believe this condition was true in Eden, but changed after the Fall.

After the Flood, God tells Noah that he may eat animals, so this seems to support the vegetarian claim as well. Between Adam and Noah, there were animal sacrifices (Gen. 4:4). While it does not say specifically, it would be reasonable to assume that they did not waste the meat, and consumed it. However, this is just my opinion. With that said, I see no problems with believing that all mankind were vegetarian. It has no impact upon the age of the earth debate.

Sheffield carries this idea even further, saying that every living thing God created was vegetarian until after the Flood. While there are verses for mankind being vegetarian, there are absolutely none for this idea. I do believe, however, that this may have been true for the Garden of Eden, but outside of Eden, it was a dog-eat-dog world.

Day Seven (Page 69)

The first two pages of this section discuss which day is the day of rest...is it Saturday or Sunday? This has absolutely nothing to do with the age of the earth, and presents no issues for old earth creationists. He continues with a discussion of more words in Hebrew, also irrelevant for the age issue.

He comes back in the end to the Canopy Theory, with the claim that Genesis 2:5-6, shows that it did not rain until the Flood. This also is on Answers in Genesis list of arguments not to use, and is mainly taught by Hovind and Baugh. Interestingly, the AiG item on the list of arguments that creationists should not use says...

Many of Carl Baugh's creation 'evidences'. Sorry to say, AiG thinks that he's well meaning but that he unfortunately uses a lot of material that is not sound scientifically. So we advise against relying on any 'evidence' he provides, unless supported by creationist organisations with reputations for Biblical and scientific rigour. Unfortunately, there are talented creationist speakers with reasonably orthodox understandings of Genesis (e.g. Kent Hovind) who continue to promote some of the Wyatt and Baugh 'evidences' despite being approached on the matter.

Wyatt was not previously mentioned. He supposedly found Noah's Ark. Since Sheffield is apparently depending on the Hovind/Baugh evidences, Sheffield must be considered to be completely untrustworthy in scientific matters...even by young earth creationist standards!

Surprisingly, he does not argue that the seventh day was also 24 hours.

Chapter 3 – “Eden and Eve”

Location (Page 73)

Sheffield addresses critics who say that if Eden existed, why can't we find it today. I agree with Sheffield's synopsis of this topic, aside from his reference to the ill-fated Canopy Theory.

Life In Eden (Page 75)

His first two paragraphs present no problems, as this is what old earth creationists believe as well. He goes on to mention some have attacked the notion that the two trees existed, calling them instead "poetic figures." As a progressive creationist, I believe as Sheffield does, in a literal Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge. He goes on to discuss the doctrines of predestination and free will. As these have nothing to do with the age of the earth, there are no problems here for old earth believers.

The "Help Meet" (Page 77)

The beginning of this section has no bearing on the age issue. Sheffield goes on to argue against evolution, using an illustration from a National Geographic magazine about the selection of four artists, who were given bone fragments from a two million year old hominid, and they drew completely different pictures of the supposed hominid. He then goes on to state that there is much misleading information out there, sometimes deliberate. However, one can easily see the problem in this illustration. What are the qualifications of the four artists? Are they merely artists, or are they trained in other fields? If they are merely artists, do they truly understand human anatomy? If not, of course they would draw the hominids differently. This does not prove that evolutionists put out misleading data...it proves that different artists, with questionable scientific training, interpret bones differently.

The First Home (Page 79)

Sheffield gives a lengthy discussion on marriage and the home. As a conservative old earth believer, I agree with him on these issues.

This chapter is so generic in nature, that it should present no problems for old earth believers. No evidence is discussed relative to the age of the earth.

Chapter 4 - “The Entrance of Sin”

In this chapter Sheffield discusses the Fall of Man. He does so in such a generic way, that most old earth creationists can agree with almost the entire chapter. The only thing interesting in the opening pages, which I've heard of before, is the allusion to Adam carrying on conversations with the animals (page 90). This is complete speculation and requires quite a large imagination, but if he wants to believe it, go right ahead.

The Original Attack on God's Word (Page 90)

He mentions the liberal nature of some theologians today, who interpret the word very loosely. He's absolutely correct...we have many liberals today who take liberty with God's Word when they should not. Progressive creationists, who believe in an old earth, are not among these liberals. We believe in an inerrant Word. Some theistic evolutionists also accept an inerrant Word. Believers in the Gap Theory also tend to be conservative. For the majority of old earth believers, who are conservative, no such warning of liberalism is needed.

On the part about Eve saying, "neither shall ye touch it," it is true that Genesis does not record God saying this. Sheffield says this makes Eve's words inaccurate. However, just because Genesis does not record it coming from God, does not mean that God did not say it. Since it is there, I believe God probably said it at some time. Adam and Eve were used to walks in the Garden, conversing with God. We don't have a record of any of those conversations. Therefore, we cannot assume that God never said these words. God has no doubt said many things that were never written down.

Man's Answer (Page 95)

No problems in this section for old earth believers.

God's Provision (Page 97)

On page 100, he says that "Some have pointed out that the snakes literally eat dust with their food as they grovel in the dust." Having had pet snakes, and studying snakes, I can say that snakes do not eat dust, any more than we do. Our own food collects dust as it sits on the table. Of course, the snake's food walks in dust, and has some on its feet and fur...but all carnivorous animals have this problem, not just snakes. I would classify this remark as "an old wives tale."

On page 103, he refers to God clothing Adam and Eve. This is the typical young earth claim for the first animal death, despite all the evidence from the fossil record. This young earth speculation provides no problems for old earth believers.

Overall, this chapter presents a good general discussion, with no arguments against an old earth.

Chapter 5 - "God's Way Under Attack"

In this chapter Sheffield discusses Cain and Abel, and he starts with a generic introduction to the story, which presents no problems for old earth belief. In fact, there are no claims whatsoever in this chapter that have any age issues, so feel free to skip to the Chapter 6 review.

Rebellion Instead of Repentance (Page 107)

Sheffield addresses no issues related to the age of the earth.

Sin Begets Sin (Page 108)

There is a minor jab at non-literal interpreters of Scripture, but aside from this, there is nothing other than a general discussion of Cain.

A Wayward Wanderer With A Wife (Page 110)

Again he presents no arguments against an old earth. He briefly mentions the problem of where Cain's wife came from, and here I agree with him. Critics of this issue have ground to stand on.

Descendants of Cain (Page 112)

A general discussion, with no claims about the age of the earth.

Chapter 6 - "The Other Son: Seth"

In this chapter Sheffield discusses Adam's son Seth., and he explains the reasoning behind the Bible following Seth's genealogy. No problems here for old earth belief.

A Family Tree (Page 118)

He briefly discusses the genealogies of Genesis 5. He notes that the genealogies begin with the creation of man, and do not span the millions of years of evolutionary development. Since it is a record starting with Adam, one would not expect it to contain the millions of years prior to Adam, so this little barb presents no problems. He later says the age of the earth is critical, and that the millions of years presents many scientific impossibilities. Naturally, he gives no examples of these impossibilities, and I've seen none so far in over 20 years of research on the creation. He goes on to say that the Bible offers the only "viable explanation which agrees with proven scientific facts." I agree, the Bible agrees with old earth creationism, either with or without evolution. Although it also agrees with young earth creationism, "proven scientific facts" do not agree with a young earth, making Sheffield's claim empty. It is only within an old earth interpretation that the Bible and science agree.

The Question of Longevity (Page 119)

Sheffield addresses the long ages of some of those first people. No doubt everyone knows who the oldest human was (Methuselah, aged 969). As I expected, he turns to the Canopy Theory for support. However, this theory has been thoroughly defeated, and is even disavowed by the young earth ministry Answers in Genesis, being on their lists of arguments that creationists should not use¹. Again, this is showing his preference for using arguments from questionable sources, such as Carl Baugh² and Kent Hovind.

Overall, there is nothing presented here with any significance for the age of the earth.

Enoch and Methuselah (Page 121)

He begins with a discussion of Enoch, whom God took to heaven, without his ever experiencing death. There is nothing here related to the age of the earth. Likewise, the discussion on Methuselah has nothing to do with the age of the earth.

Overall, this chapter presents no relevant information for the age of the earth debate, and aside from the Canopy theory reference, presents no issues for old earth creationists to address.

¹ answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/dont_use.asp

² <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/paluxy/whatbau.html>

Chapter 7 - "Noah and the Flood"

Sheffield's discussion of the Flood begins with the flood legends argument...since there are so many flood legends around the world, they indicate a great flood from the past. As an old earth creationist, this presents no problems, since we all believe in a flood. He mentions the single land mass during the time of Peleg, an argument which the young earth ministry Answers in Genesis has on their "do not use" list (answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/dont_use.asp). This division obviously refers to linguistics, not geology.

To support the young earth, he throws out several issues, all of which have been answered by old earth believers.

Claim: The top of Mt. Everest is sedimentary rock with fossils. True, but it does not support a young earth.

Rebuttal: Plate tectonics provides an excellent mechanism for this to occur. For more, see <http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CC/CC364.html>.

Claim: Rapidly Buried Fossils indicate a Flood did it.

Rebuttal: I agree...but was it Noah's Flood, or a local flood event. You cannot say which one if you did not witness the actual flood event causing the fossil. For more, see Buried Birth (www.answersincreation.org/buriedbirth.htm); Insect Fossil Bed (www.answersincreation.org/insectbed.htm).

Next he considers the ark, saying it was designed to float. I agree. However, tests done by young earth scientists, do not take into account the conditions of the flood. For instance, a very good study was done by young earth creationists, in which the seaworthiness of the ark was examined.¹ The study examined 8 factors, such as heave, pitch, roll, deckwetting (impacting waves), etc. Unfortunately, they forgot one very critical motion...forward motion! (see www.answersincreation.org/arkstudy.htm). They approached their study with the assumption the ark would be floating in place. However,

young earth creationists Baumgardner and Barnette worked out an excellent study of what happens to a globe full of water.² You get currents topping out at over 178 miles per hour! The Ark would have to withstand the pressures of racing around the globe at the speed of a NASCAR race car! You see, the currents are needed to erode the rocks so that the rock layers we see can be built by Noah's Flood. As you can see, these two research articles wonderfully support young earth creationism by themselves, but when you combine them, it's a disaster for the young earth model! In a globe full of water, Noah would be circling the globe every 5.4 days! The young earth study on the Ark did not take into account his forward motion, rendering this excellent study useless.

In a local flood scenario, however, Noah's Ark would have no problems floating around in the Middle East. The young earth study on the Ark actually supports an old earth, local flood scenario!

Sheffield then goes into a discussion of how there will be scoffers in the last days. He says they ignore the literal interpretation of the promises concerning Jesus return, and they scoff at the concept of a world wide flood. Old earth believers, who are literal in their Biblical interpretations, have no issues here. We do not believe in a world wide flood, but a local flood. A local flood is supported through a literal reading of the Flood account. We do scoff at the supposed young earth evidences for a world wide flood, as they all can be shown to be false. We can make this claim, while completely agreeing with the Scripture verses that Sheffield uses. We don't deny Noah's Flood, or the promises of Jesus' return.

He then moves on to a brief discussion on the "sons of God" marrying the daughters of men. There are no issues here for the age of the earth.

Giants (Page 128)

Nothing of significance here for the age of the earth debate.

The Ark (Page 130)

He gives a brief discussion of the size of Noah's Ark, with no claims as to its ability to house all of the animal species.

In calculating the volume of the ark, most young earth creationist studies do the simple width times height times length to get the volume. However, they neglect to subtract the volume of that space that is taken up by the wood itself...the floors, supports, outer hull, etc. Therefore, young-earth calculations are at least 10 percent too large.

More importantly, the calculations for food for the animals is done based on a 371 day requirement (see the ICR Impact Article #273, at icr.org/pubs/imp/imp-273.htm).

However, a much greater requirement existed in a young-earth, global flood model.

By the young-earth model, all animals before the flood were plant eaters. After the flood, they were allowed to eat meat. Also, by the young-earth model, all the fossil bearing sedimentary rocks were deposited during the flood. In order to erode rock to deposit these sedimentary layers, much water force was needed. Recall the ocean pattern article we talked about above? Young-earth creation theorists Baumgardner and Barnette worked out an excellent model of what happens when you have a globe full of water.² They were able to show that you would get ocean currents of greater than 178 miles per

hour. Therefore, underwater during a worldwide flood, all existing vegetation would have been stripped from the land and killed. Those that were not would have been buried by the massive amounts of sediment being deposited.

What was the land like that Noah found after the flood? By the young-earth model, it would have been a desert wasteland, with no plants growing anywhere on the planet. Provided the seeds floated, it would take many years for plants to repopulate the globe. You may ask what this has to do with Noah's ark. Well, if there were no plants, then the animals that were on the ark would need Noah to feed them for a few more years. However, ark studies do not account for this extra volume of food!

Two more points. After the flood, according to young-earth theory animals became carnivorous. Also, they claim that there were dinosaurs on the ark. With no food, and hungry T-rex's and raptors prowling around, all animal life, including man, would probably be extinct within a few months after the ark landed!

He again makes the statement that rain had never fallen. However, when God told Noah it was going to rain, Noah did not ask God, "What is rain?" Also, the rock record is full of raindrop impressions from millions of years ago.

Sheffield mentions the standard claim that the animals on the ark were young, thus they would require more sleep, and less food. In my experience, young animals require more food, as they are growing, but this is a minor point. In reality, the Bible does not give us the ages of the animals, however, it is interesting to note that in order to fit the animals on the ark, young earth creationists specify that they are young and take up less space. Thus, the "young earth" theory is what is driving the claim that the animals were young, and not actual evidence from God's Word.

Also driven by young earth theory is the claim that Noah took "kinds" and not "species." As Hovind points out, there are over 130 varieties of dogs...but they are all dogs (actually, there are only 34 species of dogs, so Hovind must be looking at "breeds"). Using this simplistic approach, young earth creationists claim you would only have about 300 distinct pairs of "kinds" on the Ark.

That means that these 300 pairs "evolved" into what we have today. In fact, young earth creationists admit this, and say that this rapid evolution is "microevolution." Here is what must evolve, for several of the more common animals:³

- Dogs - 1 pair on ark to 34 species today
- Rabbits - 1 to 80
- Even-Toed Ungulates (deer-type) - 1 to 220
- Marsupials - 1 to 272
- Shrews & Moles - 1 to 375+
- Bats From - 1 to 925
- Rodents - 1 to 2000+
- Frogs & Toads - 1 to 4,000+

As you can see, we should be seeing quite a few new species evolving every year...in fact, we could probably sit and watch rodents and frogs evolve with our naked eye!

Old earth theory does not require such fanciful imagination. Noah only needed species living in the Middle East. There would have been no need for koalas and other

animals to be on the ark. And, you would not need such hyper-microevolution to account for today's species.

Next, he addresses dinosaurs, saying they were on the Ark. He mentions "absolute scientific proof" that dinosaurs were alive with man (footprints, tools, utensils). He previously mentioned the footprint issue, and that has been thoroughly rebutted. In the case of the Burdick print, it is even shown that this was carved from the rock (the rock was even upside down!). For more, see <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/paluxy.html>. I'm not sure what he means by the tools and utensils claim. This is the first time he has mentioned it, and there are no dinosaur claims I know of related to tools and utensils. Next, he uses Job 40-41 as evidence that dinosaurs are mentioned in the Bible. To read more about this erroneous claim, read Job 40-41.

Next, he mentions modern sightings of dinosaurs, referring to hundreds of sightings of sea monsters. Young earth creationists claim these are plesiosaurs, and show that dinosaurs are still alive. However, plesiosaurs are not dinosaurs. All dinosaurs are land-dwelling. Even if a plesiosaur is found alive today, it does not prove the earth is young. For more on this, see Plesiosaurs: What If? (www.answersincreation.org/plesiosaur.htm).

He makes the claim that sea creatures did not have to be on the ark. However, remember the study which showed ocean currents of 178 miles per hour? These conditions would have likely killed all the sea life.

On page 139, he says the Canopy, which they had known all their lives, began to collapse. Again, the Canopy theory has some *extreme problems*. To understand why, see <http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CH/CH310.html>.

Next he argues against a local flood theory, which most old earth creationists believe. Here are his claims:

Claim: It does not explain how fossils are on mountaintops and all over the world.

Rebuttal: Plate tectonics explains how fossil-bearing strata end up at elevation. And of course, there are animals all over the world, contributing to the fossil record in every locale.

Claim: All the high hills were covered (Gen. 7:19-20). That would mean mountains in the region, over two miles high, would be covered.

Rebuttal: In other words, water could not be two miles high in this area, without gravity causing it to run to other parts of the globe. You would need an invisible wall to hold the water in place. However, looking at a map of modern day Iraq, it would be no great problem to flood the Tigris/Euphrates river valleys, to the point where Noah, on the Ark, would not be able to see dry land in any direction. You would not need to flood to the tops of the mountains of Ararat. The tops of the mountains where mankind had inhabited would be covered, and that is the key.

Although Mount Ararat is in Turkey, the mountain range containing Ararat extends into Northern Iraq. Thus, Noah could have drifted north until he came to rest against these mountains in northern Iraq. Of course, this does not take into account God's supernatural power. If you want to believe an invisible wall held

the water in...go right ahead...God could have done it. However, it is not necessary given the circumstances.

Claim: All the animals, all over the entire globe, died.

Rebuttal: The Flood account is written from the perspective of mankind (Noah). On the Ark, with no land in sight, he would no doubt claim this were true...even though beyond the horizon, there was dry land and living animals. All of the land that mankind had lived in, and all the animals in those locales, were destroyed. Thus, God destroyed everything known to mankind. There would have been no need for God to destroy animals outside of man's influence, because man's corruption had not reached those localities.

Claim: "God could have just told Noah to move!"

Rebuttal: And all of the people would have followed him to safety!

Claim: If it were local, then God's promise never to flood the earth again is empty.

Rebuttal: God promised never to never again flood the earth. There are two ways to look at it. First, God lets nature run its course. In the case of the Flood, he intervened. God would never again intervene in the natural laws he set in motion and cause a Flood. Second, there never has been another flood of this magnitude. Sure, there have been other local floods, but they are smaller in comparison with the Flood of Noah.

Sheffield mentions that these attacks are coming from within the church, weakening the faith of young believers (page 141). Actually, the opposite is occurring. As old earth creationism takes over, people are realizing you can accept science and the Bible, and their faith is being strengthened. What Sheffield is alluding to is that young earth creationist's faith is being weakened. As they learn the truth, they are leaving the church. This is because the church is presenting this as an either/or scenario. Either you accept the young earth as fact, or you reject the Bible. Thus, young earth creationists, by their false interpretations of science and the Bible, are bringing this demise upon themselves. It need not be this way! You can believe in an inerrant, literal Genesis, and believe that the earth is old. If young earth creationists would recognize this, they could save themselves many problems, and they would stop driving people away from Christ.

On page 142, he alludes to the claim that the ark gently floated, and did not undergo hurricane force conditions. In an old earth, local flood scenario, this works. Given a globe full of water traveling at 178 miles per hour, it does not fit the young earth description (for more, reference the articles previously cited on this page).

Sheffield continues with some general descriptions with no bearing on the age of the earth issue. Overall, this chapter contains no barriers to old earth belief. You can still believe in a literal Flood without any issues.

¹ Safety investigation of Noah's Ark in a seaway
http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/Magazines/tj/docs/v8n1_ArkSafety.asp

² Patterns of Ocean Circulation Over the Continents During Noah's Flood
http://www.icr.org/index.php?module=research&action=index&page=researchp_jb_patternsofcirculation

³ All numbers from <http://www.biokids.umich.edu/>

Chapter 8 - "Beginning Again"

A New World (Page 146)

Still clinging to the Canopy Theory, Sheffield begins to explain how the world is different. However...he fails to address the topic of "A New World." He gets off on a tangent, discussing other issues. Therefore, we will cover it here.

What was the land like that Noah found after the flood? By the young-earth model, it would have been a desert wasteland, with no plants growing anywhere on the planet. Do you recall the work of young earth creationists Baumgardner and Barnette. They did the study on patterns of ocean circulation during the Flood.¹ This study was done so that the forces for eroding massive quantities of rocks, to make the new rock layers we see today, could be demonstrated. With ocean currents topping off at 178 miles per hour, all previously existing vegetation would have been killed. When Noah landed, the earth would have been a complete wasteland. Noah apparently waited in the ark for several weeks before leaving. This would have been because the mud would have been impassible.

Speaking of vegetation, what about the olive leaf that the dove brought back to Noah? If there were no plants, where did it come from? The young-earth model, with the earth stripped of vegetation, has no explanation for this. However, for an old-earth, the dove merely flew far enough to where the flood did not affect the land, and got the leaf there.

All the vegetation would have to grow anew from seeds. Provided the seeds floated and survived the turmoil of the oceans, it would take many years for plants to repopulate the globe. If there were no plants when Noah left the ark, then the animals that were on the ark would need Noah to feed them for a few more years. However, ark studies do not account for this extra volume of food!

Another point to consider is carnivorous activity. After the flood, according to young-earth theory animals became carnivorous. Also, they claim that there were dinosaurs on the ark. With no food, and hungry T-rex's and raptors prowling around, all animal life, including man, would probably be extinct within a few months after the ark landed.

According to the young earth model, the earth after the Flood would have been an inhospitable ball of mud. Where does this leave young earth creationism...stuck in the mud!

A New Diet and the Blood (Page 148)

Sheffield briefly discusses the addition of meat to mankind's diet. No ideas relative to the age of the earth are presented.

A New Diet and a Rainbow (Page 149)

The only issue here is the rainbow. God makes a new covenant, with the rainbow as the symbol of that covenant. Sheffield is arguing from the position that there was no rain prior to the Flood, therefore there could be no rainbows before the Flood. However, God could use the rainbow as a sign of his covenant, even though the rainbow previously existed. As stated before, no rain before the flood is on the Answers in Genesis list of arguments that young earth creationists should not use (answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/dont_use.asp).

The Shame of Drunkenness (Page 151)

Nothing of significance for the age of the earth is presented.

¹ Patterns of Ocean Circulation Over the Continents During Noah's Flood
icr.org/index.php?module=research&action=index&page=researchp_jb_patternsofcirculation

Chapter 9

“Genealogies from the Past That Touch the Future”

The three page introduction to this paragraph has absolutely nothing of significance related to the age of the earth.

Division of the People (Page 157)

In this section he alludes to Genesis 10:5, implying that this may mean the division of the continents. This will be addressed in the Division of the Land Mass section below.

The Development of the Babel Concept (Page 158)

Sheffield gives the background for the cause of Babel, and relates it to today's movement to unify the world's churches together. He does have a valid point. I'm all for getting along with other denominations and faiths, but we cannot let this weaken our own beliefs. If such a movement requires you to make a change in your beliefs, then that is a warning to slow down and examine what you are doing.

Division of the Land Masses (Page 162)

At question here is Genesis 10:5:

From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.

Also of relevance is Genesis 10:25

Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.

Sheffield uses this to argue that the breakup of the original continent Pangea occurred during Peleg's lifetime. He throws out the idea, however, without any scientific facts to back it up. For instance, he says that the breakup was originally said to be 465 million years ago, but that "Current data indicates the initial movement of the continents in thousands rather than millions of years as they had previously proposed." He gives no data, no references for this claim. I have never seen anyone other than young earth creationists propose this. No doubt, the data he is referring to is published by some young earth creationist. In reality, there is NO DATA that estimates the breakup of the continents only a few thousand years ago. This illustrates a problem rampant within young earth creationism. It is common practice to throw out statements like these, without any scientific facts to back it up. In other words, "If Brother Hovind said it, it must be true." The words of several misguided Christians, like Mr. Hovind and Mr. Carl Baugh, are taken for truth by their faithful followers, without any examination of the evidence to verify the facts.

The young earth ministry Answers in Genesis has this on their list of arguments that young earth creationists should definitely not use.¹ Here is what they say:

‘Earth’s division in the days of Peleg (Gen. 10:25) refers to catastrophic splitting of the continents.’ Commentators both before and after Lyell and Darwin (including Calvin, Keil and Delitzsch, and Leupold) are almost unanimous that this passage refers to linguistic division at Babel and subsequent territorial division. We should always interpret Scripture with Scripture, and there’s nothing else in Scripture to indicate that this referred to continental division. But only eight verses on (note that chapter and verse divisions were not inspired), the Bible states, ‘Now the whole earth had one language and one speech’ (Gen. 11:1), and as a result of their disobedience, ‘the LORD confused the language of all the earth’ (Gen. 11:9). This conclusively proves that the ‘Earth’ that was divided was the same Earth that spoke only one language, i.e. ‘Earth’ refers in this context to the people of the Earth, not Planet Earth.

Another major problem is the scientific consequences of such splitting—another global flood! This gives us the clue as to when the continents did move apart — during Noah’s Flood — see below on plate tectonics.

However, as you can see, AiG does have another motive for claiming the continents did not split in Genesis 11. They account for the continental movement during the Flood of Noah. However, this is flawed also. For example, the Hawaiian Island chain was created by the oceanic plate slowly moving over an erupting hot spot. As the plate went across, new islands were created. The older islands in the chain are very much older than the new islands.² Also, according to the young earth theory, all ocean floors would be the same age. However, both radiometric dating and the amount of sedimentation both show extreme differences in ages.² There are other reasons as well, and you can check them out in the reference below.²

Overall, Sheffield presents no information contrary to an old earth. As he has done throughout the book, there are many statements made, but without the scientific data to back up the statements. The young earth reader is supposed to take Sheffield's word as truth...just like he takes Mr. Hovind's arguments for truth, without examining them to see if they are true. Mr. Sheffield is exhibiting the standard behavior for young earth creationists...full acceptance of an authority figure without verification. In other words, they are gullible (easily deceived or duped; easily tricked because of being too trusting (from dictionary.com)). Don't get me wrong...young earth creationists are smart people, but they have grown up in this culture that accepts this type of behavior.

¹ answersingenesis.org/home/area/faq/dont_use.asp

² <http://www.talkorigins.org/indexcc/CD/CD750.html>

Chapter 10 - "Where Did They Go From Babel?"

Division of the Language (Page 166)

There is nothing of significance for the age of the earth debate. The author talks about Babel and the division of the languages. Conservative old earth believers will have no problems with this passage of Scripture.

Abram's Genealogy (Page 173)

Sheffield mentions the declining life spans of the people after the flood, attributing this to the absence of the pre-flood "canopy." Since the ill-fated canopy theory has been shown to be false in previous chapters, we will not address it here. There are other theories for how man's lifespan decreased. All are mere speculation, so I leave it to the reader to investigate this on their own.

A Man Called From the Multitude (Page 176)

Nothing related to the age of the earth is presented in this section.

Conclusion

Sheffield gives a final admonition to accept the Word of God literally. As a literal, progressive creationist, I have no problems doing so. Yes, there is a threat to the Bible today from liberal pastors and theologians, who pick and choose what they want from the Bible, and call the rest fairy tales. We must guard against them, and defend the Scriptures as the true, literal, infallible Word of God.

Overall, Sheffield has given no data to support young earth creationism. When he gives statements, they are not backed up by facts, and the reader is expected to accept it blindly. Interestingly, he never argues against progressive creationists, nor even mentions Dr. Hugh Ross, the most prominent progressive creationist. It could be that he recognizes PCs as valid, inerrant Bible believers...but I doubt this is the case. This shows you the author's preparation for this book...he did not even confront the most widespread of old earth beliefs. Can you really trust him, when he hasn't even researched all the facets of creationism?

Yes, you can believe in an old earth, and an inerrant Word. This book gives no valid reasons why you cannot do this. Keep up the faith, and God Bless!