

Book Review
Grand Canyon: Monument
To Catastrophe
Chapter 8 – Biology of Grand Canyon
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In this chapter, the main argument of the authors is against the evolutionary position. From an old-earth Christian perspective, whether or not you have an issue with this chapter depends on your belief.

Some old-earth creationists, known as progressive creationists, do not believe in evolution, and thus these people could completely agree with the authors of this chapter.

However, some old-earth creationists are 'theistic evolutionists,' who believe the earth is old, and that God used evolutionary principles to create the life forms we see today.

I am a progressive creationist. However, I do not know enough about evolution to debate it, and thus remain open in my beliefs. My rebuttal for this chapter is based solely on a common sense, logical approach. By its very nature, my response will appear to be in support of the evolutionist. However, I am merely pointing out flaws in the young-earth argument. You have to make your own mind up about evolution.

Design

An Intelligent Design (Page 153)
The Designer's Genius (Page 155)

In these sections, the authors give background information that does not impact belief in an old earth.

Cooperation (Page 156)

In this section the authors try to create the illusion that evolutionary theory contains myth, particularly the "life-and-death, dog-eat-dog" struggle that life forms go through to survive. They try to paint nature as being the opposite, as cooperating with each other in survival. While partly true, their approach is overly simplistic.

They try to show the evolutionary position as being in constant combat with each other. However, the essence of the theory is not constant combat as the author's propose. It would more accurately be termed "Looking out for Number One." Of course evolutionists do not propose that the animal kingdom is in constant conflict...they never have. To state so is to pull the meaning of the struggle for life out of context. Taken as a whole, evolution does not mean constant conflict.

In the second column on 156, they use a quote by Went, stating that plants in the desert share the resources with each other. It states that when resources are limited, the

plants will remain small, instead of growing taller. True, but this does not negate the basic premise of evolution. A plant in the desert is only concerned with its own survival. It grows smaller, not because it is cooperating with other plants, but because its roots cannot take in enough nourishment for large growth. Its roots are competing with the roots of other nearby plants, and this limits its resources for growth...thus growth is limited by competition, not by cooperation. Again, this is a young-earth oversimplification of the basic tenant of evolutionary theory.

Under the quote, the authors state that observations reveal the struggle for survival is a myth. No. The very existence of this young-earth book on the Grand Canyon is proof of this instinct for survival. If the authors did not see old-earth belief as a threat, there would be no need to defend their theory. This book proves they feel threatened, and are defending themselves...a basic part of the theory of the struggle which they aim to disprove.

The authors state that animals cooperate because decreased competition leads to greater diversity, versus the diversity that would come out of a “winner take all” system. Evolution does not propose a winner take all attitude...it only does this if you oversimplify it and take it out of context. There is no winner take all conflicts in the animal kingdom...the lion kingdom is not trying to rule the world...they are only looking out for number one...themselves, and could care less about world domination.

The authors then give four points that prove cooperation. Yes, cooperation deserves as much attention as conflict, but if you look at these points, there is no problem with an evolutionist agreeing with them. Again, if you don’t take evolutionary theory out of context, there is no problem here.

At the bottom of page 157, the authors state a classic example of cooperation, and then claim that “Evolution’s insistence on the theory of struggle for survival would never be able to rationalize such behavior. Actually, looking at this example, I see no problems for the evolutionist. These fish are doing what is mutually beneficial for both, and this “evolved behavior” causes no problems. Only if you “oversimplify” and pull evolution out of context can you make such a silly claim.

Peace With the World (Page 158)

All the designs mentioned are wonderful creations of God, but do little to argue against evolutionary theory. This list could be endless, and so would the evolutionists explanations for them. In other words, this section is glossy, for show, with no real meat. It simply amounts to an emotional appeal to the reader, nothing more.

Economy and Efficiency (Page 159)

Again, all marvelous examples of God’s creation, but doesn’t present hard evidence against evolution. By providing superficial arguments, the authors are merely appealing to the emotions of the reader, rather to the cognitive minds of their audience.

Life in the Desert

An interesting section, which will come in handy for visitors to the desert, but no arguments presented for a young earth.

Distribution of Organisms

Again, handy for the desert traveler, but uninteresting to the young-earth/old earth debate.

Life Zone Communities

More of the same.

Research Studies

An introduction to the next three sections, in which the authors present three arguments against evolution.

Glen Canyon Dam

This example has absolutely nothing to do with evolutionary theory. The authors look at this example of about 50 years in duration, and noted that no new organisms evolved as a result of this dam. That's not surprising, since evolutionary theory proposes changes over thousands, or millions of years.

Management of Kaibab Deer

Again, an argument that proves nothing. Again we have an oversimplification of evolutionary theory. This study occurred over a 33 year period...of course nothing "evolved," nor would any evolutionist claim that something could have evolved.

The example of the Glen Canyon Dam and Kaibab Deer are nothing more than a superficial argument, and they amount to nothing more than an emotional appeal to the readers...there is no real science presented here.

Studies of Tassel-Eared Squirrels

Here the authors compare two different squirrels, separated by the Canyon...by their reckoning, they have been separated since the Flood, about 4,500 years ago. The author's actually make a decent case with this one.

Abert and Kaibab Varieties (Page 174)

Two Varieties/One Population (Page 175)

A Barrier to Migration (Page 175)

Recency of Barrier (Page 176)

Nothing important in these sections.

Testing the Stability of a Population (Page 176)

Here the author's state the Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium problem. The claim is that evolutionists use this to show that a species should or should not be evolving. Are they right? I don't know. Is this a valid theory, or is it old science, as is the case in many young-earth arguments? (If someone out there is willing to address this, let me know).

Is the K. Squirrel at Equilibrium (Page 176)

The authors present 10 points that go along with the Hardy-Weinberg theory, and use this to show that the Kaibab Squirrel does not fit the model of a non-evolving lifeform.

1. Large Population. According to the authors, this squirrel doesn't have a large population. Two points...what is the definition of "very large," and two...it doesn't matter what the population has been in the last few decades. To be conclusive, they must present evidence based on the population during the majority of this supposed 4,500 year separation. Before man came along, there may have been millions of these squirrels.
2. Mating. Must be completely random. I don't buy this (the evolutionist theory about mating). If this is true, then animals which mate for life, such as doves, could never reach equilibrium.
3. OK, whatever they say.
4. True, valid point.
5. OK
6. Generation overlap. This would rule out almost all animals on earth!
7. Combined with #6 above
8. Egg/Sperm production is normal. True, this would never be valid.
9. And 10, Gene Frequency/Contribution. Not sure I agree with the author's on this one. I don't know enough to debate it, though.

For these restrictions, the Kaibab squirrel fails on most, and thus the squirrel should be evolving rapidly. Since I can't speak from a scientific point of view on this, let's look at the common sense. I have two observations.

First, how long a time is sufficient to see macroevolution in process? Nobody knows. Perhaps its thousands of years, or tens of thousands. Without knowing this, we cannot hazard a guess as to whether or not these squirrels have evolved any. Therefore, both evolutionists and young-earth creationists haven't a clue into the solution to this problem!

Second, the authors prove this for the Kaibab Squirrel...what about the squirrel on the other side of the Canyon, the Abert? Could they not prove this for that squirrel? With no evidence presented for the Abert...it makes you wonder.

A Proposed Model (Page 177)

Nice, but proves nothing. The evolutionist could use this model...just multiply the time by several hundred to arrive at the millions of years, and you have the same result.

The Non-Evolution of the Tassel-Eared Squirrel (Page 178)

True, there is no proof of evolution here. However, we have no proof of non-evolution either. We could only know if we saw the original squirrels thousands of years ago right after the flood (or millions of years ago for the old-earthier). We don't know what the original squirrel was like, and thus we can't argue against (or for) evolution.

Conclusion

The authors present some emotional appeals, along with little hard evidence, but it is not enough to put serious doubt upon the evolutionist.