



## AN ARMY OF STRAW MEN: RESPONDING TO RONALD HENDEL

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In the July/August 2010 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, a disturbing and highly prejudicial column was published, entitled: "Farewell to SBL: Faith and Reason in Biblical Studies." This article was written by Ronald S. Hendel, Professor of Hebrew Bible at the University of California, Berkeley.

Hendel's article is partially intended to critique certain conflicts taking place currently within the *Society for Biblical Literature* (SBL). But the main thrust of his article aims directly and antagonistically at Christian scholars who hold to any form of orthodoxy that challenges the unstated, humanistic, *a priori* assumptions held by the vast majority of biblical scholars and archaeologists today. His article, sadly, betrays nothing less than an anti-Christian bias, humanistic fideism,<sup>[1]</sup> and the continued irrational acceptance of the general tenets and anti-supernatural assumptions of the *JEDP* hypothesis.

The spirit of this age has often caused the body of Christ to cower in a corner in false piety as the humanists destroy institutions that formerly had a Christian foundation and/or orientation. Indeed, for well over a hundred years the church has circled the wagons and pretended that personal spiritual (mystical) experiences were what was required to fend off antagonists of truth; offering up nothing more than tepid and inadequate commentary that lacked fire, precision, or impact. A strong and vigorous response is what has always been called for and which I intend to offer in the article before you.

The use of polemical language has a strong warrant in Scripture, and there are times when it is proper to respond with such a posture.<sup>[2]</sup> It is clear this is one of those times. While the language I utilize is quite strong at times, it

is directed toward Hendel's arguments and his unjustifiable, unstated, humanistic[3] view of reality. This critique is not intended as a personal attack against him. He is certainly entitled to his opinion and his views, and to practice his irrational, indefensible, humanistic fideism as he wishes. However, those of us in the Christian community are not obliged to accept his views and submit to them by jettisoning the central tenets of our orthodoxy in order to be permitted to engage in scholarship with him and other unbelievers. *In fact, as Christians who have been saved by the mercies of God in Christ, we are morally and spiritually obligated to challenge such erroneous views so that others are not misled by them.*

The purpose of this article is to provide a critique of Hendel's arguments, in the hope that the Church may be edified by seeing the irrational nature and anti-Christian bias inherent in unbelieving thought. My intention is to, unapologetically, "...destroy arguments and pretensions that set themselves up against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:5). The arguments posed by Hendel and his exaltation of man as the final reference point in determining the nature of reality are an affront to every serious and qualified Christian scholar who seeks to work and interact with those who do not profess Christ as Lord. Hendel's article is, frankly, nothing less than an outrage to Christian scholars and reeks of an unjustified, intolerant philosophical bias that cannot and should not go unchallenged.

Further, in exposing the anti-Christian bias embedded in the arguments which inform Hendel's worldview, it is my hope that sincere skeptics who read this article may become more self-conscious about the erroneous premises and faulty presuppositions they take for granted in their arguments, their views of the Bible and orthodox Christianity, and even in their daily living. *I hope to awaken skeptics from their erroneous epistemological[4] and intellectual slumber.* Perhaps the fields will be opened to sow the seeds of the Gospel in fertile soil instead of the seeds of truth falling on the unfounded and untenable boulders of unbelief.

A word to my brethren in the Church is in order before I begin this critique. A cosmic clash of worldviews is raging all around us, and the stakes are enormous. *It is time for the Church to get serious about what is happening to western civilization and to the Church itself.* Hendel's philosophical views

are held by millions of duped westerners and most of biblical and archaeological scholarship, eerily similar to the stranglehold that philosophical naturalism has on the physical sciences. Many of our brethren in the Church have been taken captive by the bewitching "hollow and deceptive philosophy" of this age. The situation is very, very grave, and requires a serious, unapologetic, and unending counter-offensive by those who profess Christ as Lord and God.

## Introduction

Hendel sets the stage as follows:

"The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know." This famous line from Pascal's *Pensées* draws a wise distinction between religious faith and intellectual inquiry. The two have different motivations and pertain to different domains of experience. They are like oil and water, things that do not mix and should not be confused. Pascal was a brilliant mathematician, and he did not allow his Catholic beliefs to interfere with his scholarly investigations. He regarded the authority of the church to be meaningless in such matters. He argued that "all the powers in the world can by their authority no more persuade people of a point of fact than they can change it." *That is to say, facts are facts, and faith has no business dealing in the world of facts. Faith resides in the heart and in one's way of living in the world.* [\[5\]](#)

## "Two-Story" Theology: A Haughty and Erroneous Faith Presupposition

With this proclamation, Hendel throws out the God of the Bible and the claims of biblical revelation about the nature of reality from word one. By now establishing "faith" as an activity that is divorced from the physical world of so-called "facts," Hendel can now lecture his readers about the applicability of autonomous human reason to critical study of the Bible.

This illegitimate bifurcation of reality[6] is a post-modern faith position, blindly accepted by millions of westerners. The Christian author and apologist Francis Schaeffer used the simple illustration of a two story house to illustrate the tenets of this belief system,[7] which has many of its roots in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant.[8] Essentially, faith is relegated to the second story of the house. Faith is detached from the realities of the physical world, nature, science, and *archaeological and biblical studies*, which reside on the first floor of the house. One has nothing to do with the other.

This view of the world is, of course, completely antithetical to what the Bible teaches about the Lordship of God in Christ over the entire cosmos. It is also blatantly anti-Christian, as it demands that those who hold to orthodoxy have no place in Hendel's world of scholarship. *Orthodoxy needs to shut up and stay upstairs*. The orthodox can participate, but only if they accept Hendel's erroneous and anti-Christian presuppositions about the nature of reality. And, accepting Hendel's philosophical view of faith and reason strips the Christian of the very doctrines which make Christianity what it is.

The Christian may join the group, but only if he is first emasculated from the central doctrines of biblical faith, such as:

1. the doctrine of God (sovereignty over *all* reality),
2. the doctrine of man (created to worship, obey and serve God in His image),
3. the doctrine of creation (the world did not make itself, was created by God, is upheld by God, and belongs to God),
4. the Resurrection (which is an historical, *lower story* space-time event with enormous present day and eschatological ramifications),
5. the doctrine of sin (man is fallen and his reasoning faculties are informed by self-deception and a hostility toward God and His authority),

6. the doctrine of Scripture (the Bible stands on its own authority and does not need the affirmation of men, especially fallen sinners who are in rebellion against God).

I could go on for quite some time with this list. A Christian who accepts Hendel's view of faith and reason has essentially been stripped of the very weapons and doctrines he needs to defend and share his Christianity. He has, in effect, gone from an armed Christian warrior to an ineffectual Christian prisoner of war. Whenever he stands in the first floor of the humanistic house and accepts the unbelieving philosophical premises located therein, he stands naked with no weapons, no clothes, no food and no answers.

Pastor Jim Powell of West Valley Presbyterian Church, Emmaus, Pa., recently presented an excellent sermon that dealt directly with this upper and lower story belief system that is pervasive in western thinking. Powell correctly asserts that this philosophy has created a culture of nihilism, where people can relegate the most irrational beliefs to the second story of the house, and divorce those beliefs from the realities of the lower story of the house. With an appropriate sarcastic tone, Powell imitates one person conversing with another in this cultural milieu: "It's ok for you to keep your irrational, new agey pantheism. Never mind that it makes no sense whatsoever. As long as that's what YOU believe." Hendel is telling Christian scholars a very similar thing: "You can have your irrational, orthodox Christianity up on the second floor. Just make sure you keep it there...*because there is no place for it here and we neutral, reasonable, and unbiased [9] scholars know more about the nature of reality than you.*"

What solution to this enormous culture problem does Pastor Powell propose? *The "whole house theology" of biblical revelation as proclaimed by the Apostle Paul to the Athenian philosophers in Acts 17.* [10] Verse by verse, the Apostle, by the Spirit of Christ, utterly dismantles the views of the Greek philosophers, and then unapologetically presents the "whole house theology" of creation, fall, redemption, judgment and restoration. A theology that encompasses the entire house. In other words, the very theology that Hendel demands that we cannot bring to SBL and to biblical and archaeological studies is also the very theology that is needed to rescue the

culture from emotional, spiritual and moral nihilism. This whole house theology is desperately needed in order to rescue biblical and archaeological studies from the stranglehold of humanistic dogma. It is the very theology that Christians cannot and must not jettison under the humanistic, anti-Christian pressures of Hendel and his colleagues.

Naturally, Hendel offers no proof whatsoever to justify his universally sweeping and philosophically indefensible two-story truth claim. In fact, his truth claim betrays a ghastly arrogance typical of the natural, fallen, unregenerate human mind. For a human being to claim to know with such certainty that the two-story framework is the real nature of reality is the height of human arrogance. Van Til writes:

There are those, of course, who deny that they need any form of authority. They are the popular atheists and agnostics. Such men say that they must be shown by 'reason' whatever they are to accept as true. But the great thinkers among non-Christian men have taken no such position. *They know that they cannot cover the whole area of reality with their knowledge.*<sup>[11]</sup>

*What Hendel claims to know about the nature of faith and reason could only be known with certainty by an omniscient mind.* Wishing to usurp the reign of the omniscient God and replacing him with created, error-prone, sinful, limited, arrogant, human reasoning, the would-be autonomous man becomes a god unto himself. This is humanistic autonomy run amuck, under the false pretense of scholarship and neutrality.<sup>[12]</sup> Nothing could be more biased, anti-Christian, and devoid of rationality. It is philosophically and intellectually indefensible.

The following quote from Cornelius Van Til's devastating critique of Immanuel Kant summarizes Hendel's philosophical superciliousness:

According to Kant [insert Hendel and others, *ad infinitum*], man's autonomous intellectual activity can tell us what ultimate reality *cannot* be. And to say what ultimate reality cannot be is, in effect, the same as to say what it **can** and **must** be.<sup>[13]</sup>

Translation: the upper story belief system of orthodox Christianity **cannot** and **must not** have any bearing whatsoever on what happens in the lower story of the house. God **cannot** be the author of Scripture. God **cannot** be Lord of archaeology and biblical studies. God **cannot** be the governor, sustainer, and creator of the physical world. God **cannot** be the creator of, and Lord over, human reason. *The unbelieving scholar is dictating to us what Christianity can and must be, and what it cannot be.*

Here is Hendel's bold and haughty unstated ultimatum: "Christian...if you want to practice your faith up on the second floor, feel free. Practice it in your heart and in your mind and your *personal* moral practices.[\[14\]](#) But don't come around here and tell *us* that your belief system has anything to do with what goes on down here on the first floor, *in the realm of reality we call human reason and biblical and archaeological studies.*"

### **The Humanist lord and savior: Autonomous Human Reason**

Like most antagonists of orthodox biblical Faith, Hendel appeals to "human reason" (which skeptics shrewdly never define or philosophically defend) to justify his worldview, and to bolster his arguments against those who proclaim the truths of Scripture. We should not accept his unstated presuppositions.

First, Hendel is not referring to human reason as Christians would define it. *Hendel is referring to human reason that functions as a master over all.* He refers to human reason that stands as the final authority in deciding matters of truth in the study of the Bible. When skeptics approach the Bible with the idea that it may or may not be correct, they have already presupposed that it could be a human document written by the hands of men, and with errors. To presuppose that the Bible may not be what it purports to be is to assert that autonomous human reason must make the final determination on the matter. *God has nothing to do with the decision whatsoever.* It is a man-centered philosophical assumption. In Hendel's world, autonomous human reason stands *over, against and above* the Bible. *Before the debate ever begins, Hendel has already excluded orthodoxy from the discussion.*



This is completely antithetical to the claims the Bible makes about human reason and the authority of God. Human reason is a tool that God has given man, a creaturely reflection of His own infinite and perfect intellect. Like all other gifts from God, it was never intended to be a master. Human reason is a tool, not an authority. Man is more than a reasoner. He is an image bearer, a worshiper, and a spiritual being. *He is a creature, not the Creator.* He was made for God's purposes, not autonomous, man-centered purposes that humanists vainly invent. Hendel's position presupposes against this biblical understanding of human intellect *telling us all once again what reality cannot be.* Like all unbelieving thought, *Hendel treats human reason as if it were an omniscient, uncreated judge* that presides over and determines the nature of truth and reality.

Secondly, human reason is fallen because of sin. Human reason has now become a tool that fallen man uses, often quite cleverly, to militate against God's authority and His revelation as deposited in the Bible, despite the fact that *every human being already knows the God of the Bible.* (Romans 1:18-32).[\[15\]](#) Often, this is carried out in a rather complex and partially unwitting fashion,[\[16\]](#) such as the false neutrality and human centered orientation most skeptics operate under. When human reason claims a status above Scripture, asserting that it can be the final judge as to whether the Bible is the Word of God, it already presupposes against Scripture's authority, and is, in fact, rebellion against God.

Romans 8:7 is very clear about the state of the natural mind in relation to God: "the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so."[\[17\]](#) Because of sin, the natural mind is completely predisposed to militate against the reign of God and his revelation in Scripture. As such, the natural man vociferously denies that he has any kind of intellectual problem, insisting he ought to be able to sit on the throne and be the final judge in determining the nature, origins, history, authorship and place of Scripture in the lives of men. Vern Poythress summarizes thus:

...as fallen and sinful human beings we are in no position to make an accurate independent judgment about the character of the Bible and



its truthfulness. *We are not neutral judges, but judges who will inevitably misconstrue the truth. Those who attempt an independent judgment only show their own lack of self-knowledge.*[\[18\]](#)

Like most humanists, Hendel shrewdly attempts to equivocate the faculty of human reasoning as the Bible defines and limits it, and humanistic autonomous human reason, which stands as the final authority in human activity, especially *over the Bible. Christians: don't be fooled by this bait and switch tactic.* Lamenting over the presence of Pentecostals and other "fundamentalists" (the pejorative of choice for humanists everywhere) in SBL, Hendel cleverly attacks Bruce Waltke.[\[19\]](#) First, he quotes Waltke as follows:

By their faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, [evangelical scholars] ... hear the voice of higher biblical criticism, which replaces faith in God's revelation with faith in the sufficiency of human reason, as the grating of an old scratched record.[\[20\]](#)

Hendel now sets up the straw man, literally of biblical proportions, proceeding to tear it down as follows:

This is a quaintly stated position, which directly attacks the applicability of human reason to the study of the Bible. Instead of reason, "faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob"...should be the rule in Biblical scholarship.[\[21\]](#)

*See the bait and switch?* We can reasonably presume that Waltke would never say that human reason should be thrown out the window in the study of the Bible. Human beings who do not use reasoning are the deceased, infants or invalids. *Of course the orthodox utilize human reasoning in biblical scholarship.* Note how deviously Hendel misconstrues Walke's words, trying to make him and other Christians look like irrational, zealous fideists who reject reasoning faculties in exchange for idiotic, blind faith. Hendel apparently believes that Christians possess inferior intelligence, and has a completely perverted view of biblical faith, consistent with the empty-headed maxim of Mark Twain: "Faith is believing what ain't so."

Waltke, of course, is distinguishing between ***faith in the sufficiency of autonomous man-centered human reason as master over Scripture*** versus *human reasoning that properly recognizes its limited and fallen state and submits in proper faith to God's revelation because that revelation comes from an infinite, omniscient being who has exhaustive and error free knowledge, and is **the Creator of human reason***. Van Til summarizes thus:

...the Bible does not appeal to human reason as ultimate in order to justify what it says. It comes to the human being with absolute authority. Its claim is that human reason must itself be taken in the sense which Scripture takes it, namely as created by God and as therefore properly subject to the authority of God.[\[22\]](#)

Human reason is not the final authority in the study of the Bible, or any other human pursuit for that matter. It is dreadfully insufficient and incapable of making ultimate truth claims on its own, as the Bible itself clearly teaches. *Human reason is insufficient because it is created, fallible, limited, prone to egregious and catastrophic error, fallen, and ethically hostile to its Creator*. Rather, the revelation of the Bible, given by the omniscient, omnipresent, and infinite God revealed therein, should be and can be the only final authority in all human predication.[\[23\]](#)

Hendel has been very clever and shrewd in his misrepresentation of what Waltke actually said and meant. The intent is clear: to make Waltke and other Christian scholars look like incompetent zealots who throw their minds out the window in exchange for irrational dogmatism. Hendel shrewdly pits straw man faith against straw man human reason. Or, perhaps restated in these terms: Hendel pits phony empty headed religious dogma versus the unbiased, brilliant scholarship of learned men like himself.

## **Slap Me in the Face and Then Act Like You Didn't**

After grossly misrepresenting Waltke's statement, Hendel then tries to stick to his two-story view of reality. He subtly tries to embarrass Waltke, while at

the same time saying that he "give[s] Waltke the respect he has earned as a scholar" and "...Waltke is entitled to his views."[\[24\]](#)

Please allow me to translate: " Waltke can be a Christian and believe all that God of Abraham stuff (even though we unbiased, "non-religious" scholars all know it is all hogwash), and Waltke can be a scholar and study the book of Proverbs and Deuteronomy, but *Waltke better not bring his second story beliefs down here into the first floor when he does his scholarship. He'd better get in line with us humanists, and understand that Solomon had nothing to do with Proverbs and Moses did not write Deuteronomy.*"

Why doesn't Hendel have the courage to remain consistent with his first story beliefs and say what he really thinks about Waltke's Christianity? Because the two-story dichotomy gives him an escape hatch which he can duck out of without telling Waltke and other Christians that their beliefs are mythological. The two-story structure gives Hendel the best of both worlds: he can compliment Waltke for his scholarship, and at the same time, say Waltke is free to practice his irrational belief system as long as it remains on the second floor of the house. *Christian: don't be fooled by this.* Hendel is insulting every one of us who professes Christ as Lord, and hiding behind the two-story theology of this age while he does it.

### **'Critical' Investigation: Another Straw Man**

Hendel objected to the presence of fundamentalists and Pentecostals in *SBL*, so he wrote a letter to the director, admonishing him about the mission statement. In part, its purpose until 2004 was: "...to stimulate the *criticalinvestigation* of the classical biblical literatures." The director apparently informed Hendel that the statement no longer contained that language, and now reads "foster biblical scholarship."

Once again, Hendel sets up another straw man in response to this communication. He writes:

So critical inquiry -- that is to say, reason -- has been deliberately deleted as a criterion for SBL. The views of creationists, snake

handlers and faith healers now count among the kinds of Biblical scholarship that the society seeks to foster.[\[25\]](#)

I have already demonstrated how Hendel deceptively equivocates human reason as a tool of man subject to God's authority and autonomous human reason as final authority. Now, *he falsely equivocates critical inquiry/ investigation with autonomous human reason.*

Note how he never defines what critical inquiry means to a humanist like himself. Looking at the Bible "critically," as Hendel uses the term, is not a neutral proposition. A Christian would not define "critically" the same way Hendel defines it. "Critically" means accepting the unspoken secular and anti-supernatural philosophy that undergirds that criticism. This is to already presuppose against the Bible's authorship claims right from the start. Critical scholarship as defined by Hendel impugns *immediately, because it once again places the would-be autonomous man on the throne as the final judge as to the veracity of the Bible's truth claims and its historicity.* For Hendel, critical inquiry into the Bible *is equal to* autonomous human reason as final judge. Critical investigation equals man as god on the throne, plain and simple.

Christian "critical investigation" is the philosophical antithesis of Hendel's human-centric bias. When a devoted Christian studies the Bible "critically," he studies it not to impugn or sit as an unqualified judge on the throne. Rather, he studies the Bible to discover the riches and majesty of the divine oracles which God has graciously given to men. He studies it to be edified in his mind and his soul. He studies it to defend it against the attacks of fallible, sinful, rebellious men. He studies it because its beauty and majesty is worthy of man's attention and intellectual pursuit. He studies it as an act of worship. He studies it to be better equipped to share the message of the Gospel. *He studies it because it is the very Word of God Himself.*

And, when the Christian runs into a supposed error, supposed contradiction or supposed problem, he faithfully studies and pursues that issue as far as he can. He works to discover if there are solutions that a fallible mind can comprehend. If able, he studies Hebrew, Greek, archaeology, linguistics, ANE history, and the like. He uses his reasoning faculties to the best of his ability

and to the glory of God. But, most importantly, when he comes to the end of his finite, fallible, sinful reason, *he submits*. He submits because God has spoken. And when God speaks, He is always correct. When God speaks, He speaks with infinite knowledge behind His words. He speaks correctly and with authority. Hendel's scholarly attitude toward the Bible is completely antithetical to what the Christian attitude toward Scripture ought to be, which is beautifully stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith I: IV

The authority of the Holy Scripture, because of which it ought to be believed and obeyed, does not depend upon the testimony of any man or church, but entirely upon God, its author (who is truth itself); therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

Hendel fallaciously accuses *SBL* of jettisoning human reason because they have removed the "critical investigation" language from their mission statement. *Of course, it is another straw man added to his already growing army of straw men*. Hendel is really objecting because his ego-centric autonomy has been challenged. *SBL* appears as if they understand the orthodox have a place at the table, and they should not have to accept humanistic dogma as a condition for their presence. Perhaps *SBL* has recognized that humanists like Hendel use their so-called "critical investigation" to impugn and distort the authorship and message of biblical revelation. Perhaps they have decided to reject the two-story theology that is so pervasive in our culture and in academia, a dogma which Hendel so blindly accepts.

### **Hendel's Pejorative: Creationists**

A further note should be made of another insidiously deceptive tactic employed by Hendel. Hendel lumps faith healers, snake handlers and *creationists* all into the same category. The unspoken assumption, of course, is that Darwinian evolution is a proven *fact*, and anyone who actually takes the biblical account of creation seriously and challenges macro-evolution does not belong in the *SBL*, and is obviously an idiot to be

equivocated with crackpots such as snake handlers. This is a highly charged, rhetorical accusation that cannot go unanswered.

It would be relatively easy to cite a plethora of resources[26] that show the utter vacuous nature of Darwinian macro-evolution. It is a fairy tale for humanists, and they desperately cling to its tenets with an unsurpassed wild-eyed dogmatism in order to justify their humanistic autonomy. *To believe that the universe made itself and the entire complexity of life forms contained therein may be the most irrational, illogical, blind deception ever foisted upon the mind of man.* Hendel has apparently bought into its dogmas: lock, stock and barrel. This extensive quote helps to summarize the enormous problems associated with evolution, and its anti-supernatural, atheistic underpinnings:

Advocates of evolutionary theory practice evolutionism when they routinely invoke (and dogmatically defend) naturalistic and humanistic philosophical presuppositions, and arbitrarily apply those presuppositions to their interpretation of the available empirical data. This fact (which many of them zealously deny) severely erodes evolutionists' credibility, and effectively disqualifies them from any claim to objectivity in matters concerning origins and science, though much material is published by evolutionists under the pretense that it is the product only of purely objective and unprejudiced scientific inquiry.

The contributions posted at this site [see footnote] give some expression to the "other side"—dispelling the two most popular myths perpetuated by most advocates of evolutionism, namely:

1. The myth that the Neo-Darwinian macro-evolution belief system—as heavily popularized by today's self-appointed "science experts," the popular media, academia, and certain government agencies—finds "overwhelming" or even merely unequivocal support in the data of empirical science,
2. The myth that the alternative—biblical creation—somehow fails to find any compelling, corroborative support in the same data.

The question of origins is plainly a matter of science history—not the domain of applied science. *Contrary to the unilateral denials of many evolutionists, one's worldview does indeed play heavily on one's interpretation of scientific data, a phenomenon that is magnified in matters concerning origins, where neither repeatability, nor observation, nor measurement—the three immutable elements of the scientific method—may be employed.* Many proponents of evolutionism nevertheless persist in claiming exclusive “scientific” status for their popularized beliefs, while heaping out-of-hand dismissal and derision upon all doubters...[\[27\]](#)

I seriously doubt Hendel has ever entered into a "critical investigation" of the atheistic dogmatism that is Darwinian evolution.[\[28\]](#) The study of origins is dominated and under the stranglehold of philosophical naturalism. Instead, he "heaps out of hand dismissal and derisions on all doubters." Lumping those of us who accept that God has created the universe as described in biblical revelation with goofy and misguided evangelicals who have distorted Scripture is an atrocious tactic and is unacceptable in the world of so-called unbiased, intellectual scholarship that Hendel seems to admire (worship?) so much. There are many, many qualified scholars in the world of archaeology, biblical studies, chemistry, biology, astronomy, geology, etc. who do not blindly accept atheistic Darwinism, and accept the straightforward account of creation recorded in the Bible.[\[29\]](#) His comments are a slap in the face to those thousands of qualified Ph.D. scientists and theologians who don't accept Hendel's view of reality. *One ought to wonder if Hendel would include the young-earth biblical creationist Sir Isaac Newton in his pejorative, considered by many to be the greatest scientist of all-time.*

## **Hendel the Proselytizer**

Hendel laments the fact that Christians such as Waltke are now permitted to bring their orthodoxy down to the first floor, and violate the humanistic sensibilities of those who worship themselves. He is especially offended that people in SBL may actually want to see him accept that Jesus is the Messiah



(which He is), or that God might actually be holy (which He is) or that Hendel deserves judgment and death for his sins *like the rest of us*, or that God in Christ has paid the debt for our sins by virtue of his death and will give Hendel eternal life by virtue of *His literal, first-century, historical, whole-house Resurrection* if he repents and believes. Was there an altar call to receive Jesus as Lord at an SBL meeting? Highly unlikely...but the mere exposure to anything smelling of orthodoxy is apparently offensive to Hendel's sensibilities.

On the flip side of the coin, like most humanists, Hendel fails to realize that *he is a proselytizer, too*. Throughout his entire article, he is proselytizing to the reader about the nature of reality, the impossibility of whole-house theology, the primacy of autonomous human reason, and the atheopathic doctrines of evolution and the *JEDP* hypothesis. Hendel is a contender for the humanistic worldview, and is sharing his faith with all who will listen. He wants *SBL* to remain a humanistic Mecca, where believers in the pre-eminence of man can go and sit in judgment over the Word of God with their autonomous human reason, their ineffably arrogant philosophies, and their fictional theories about the Bible.

The reader should be reminded that everyone is proselytizing in all human activity, either overtly or sub-consciously. In a forum like *SBL*, where the Bible is front and center, the battle becomes more intensified and perceptible for all to see. It is well past the time for humanists to start admitting they are propagating their faith at every turn, despite their adamant denials to the contrary.

## **Examining Philosophy of "Fact" and *JEDP* Mythology**

If we refer back to Hendel's first quote, we note the use of the term "facts." Most of the time, the philosophy of "fact" is often unstated. We must be aware that no one thinks of facts as facts *in and of themselves*. All facts, no matter how mundane, require interpretation, and that interpretation is subject to the presuppositions held by the person evaluating the "facts." Greg Bahnsen writes:

The unbeliever assumes that man and the facts of his environment can be understood intelligibly whether or not there is a God who created the universe. *Both the facts and the mind of man are assumed to be self-existent and independent of any God.* Finally, the unbeliever takes man to be morally innocent...He is certainly not, as the Christian worldview maintains. [He is] willfully blind, morally rebellious and spiritually lost.[\[30\]](#)

I have clearly proven that Hendel thinks of so-called facts from an autonomous perspective. The Christian should not, and in fact, cannot do the same. *Every fact is a created fact*, and therefore derives its ultimate meaning from God. Van Til writes:

*...even to say that there are some facts that can be known without reference to God is already the very opposite of the Christian position.*[\[31\]](#)

Even mundane facts such as simple mathematical equations or simple observations in a laboratory have underlying premises. Usually, we don't quibble over such things, but in this context, we must. Christians should think radically different about the *philosophy of mathematics* or the *philosophy as to why* chemicals react in predictable ways in the laboratory. Regularity in nature is a Christian presupposition, rooted in the providential power of God. Regularity in nature, mathematical equations, and physical laws in the natural world are completely inconsistent with a chance, random universe and other unbelieving philosophies about the nature of reality.[\[32\]](#)

More pertinent to our discussion here are "facts" from the historical past. These historical "facts" require many more additional layers of interpretation, especially since the events recorded in the Bible occurred several millennia ago. Historical "facts" are outside the realm of observation, repeatability and experimentation. Those layers of interpretation in determining the "facts" of the ancient past are informed by a myriad of unspoken presuppositions.

Hendel condescendingly lectures his readers that Moses did not write Deuteronomy.[\[33\]](#) It is a "fact" that scholars have supposedly proven, and

when Waltke says otherwise, Hendel asserts that "...we are clearly not in the world of critical Biblical scholarship at all. This is religious dogma, plain and simple."[\[34\]](#) However, an examination of the "facts" thus far, and of the claims surrounding the authorship of the Pentateuch, reveals that *it is Hendel who is propagating blind, religious, humanistic dogma of the highest order.*

Since the 19th century, biblical scholars have assaulted the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch with an unrelenting fervor. Their hypotheses about the Torah are a morass of confusion, contradiction, and willy-nilly anti-supernatural subjectivism. The *JEDP* hypothesis as first espoused by Karl Graf and Julius Wellhausen has spawned a thousand more children of utter incoherence; theories which are not supported by any historical evidence whatsoever.

Clyde Billington recently published an excellent critique of these illegitimate and inane theories in an in-depth book review. This extensive list of quotes from Billington illustrates, in part, the ludicrousness of the philosophy that undergirds Hendel's contentions:

1. ...all of the founding fathers of German higher criticism believed in biblical editors, and based their theories of biblical editors on their erroneous assumption that ancient editors followed the later Renaissance model of editing.
2. Critical scholars have frequently based their textual theories upon textual "histories," which they have reconstructed or deconstructed from the biblical texts themselves. These textual "histories" seldom use, or only use in passing, actual historical sources or archaeological discoveries. This is a dishonest and deceptive use of the word "history" by critical scholars. It gives the false impression that their critical theories are historically based, when they are not. Their deceptive use of the word "history" should stop.
3. ...critical textual theories are frequently based upon highly questionable assumptions. For example, based on the old Homeric model, critical scholars frequently assumed a period of oral

transmission for various portions of the OT. I see no real problem with the possibility that portions of the Bible were passed along orally before biblical writers incorporated them into their books. However, the assumption of oral transmission is almost always based upon another assumption, which is that the Jews were not literate at some point in ancient history. This assumption is frequently made for the Patriarchal Period; that is, if the critical scholar even happens to believe there were patriarchs. This is another critical argument from silence that has now been blown away by archaeology.

4. The greatest problem for... critical scholars is that the historical and archaeological evidence does not match well, and frequently flatly contradicts, many of their textual theories. There are many examples that could be cited where almost all critical biblical scholars have failed to absorb, have ignored, have dismissed, or have not dealt with relevant archaeological and historical evidence of great importance to biblical studies.

5. Unfortunately, for most textual critics, truth is not their goal. Many biblical critics today are more interested in reader response hermeneutics and creative textual criticism than they are in finding the truth, and for some, truth is purely relative. To paraphrase a modern saying, for textual critics "it is not important whether your textual theory is true or false, but how you play the methodological game." [35]

Historical "higher criticism" invents hypothetical editors for whom there is not one shred of evidence, the critics themselves disagree with one another *ad infinitum*, the 2000 year testimony of the Church is completely ignored, orthodox Jewish history is completely disregarded, the testimony of the New Testament authors and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself are jettisoned as erroneous (Jesus said: "Moses *wrote* about me." in John 5:46), and archaeological discoveries that blatantly and utterly destroy higher criticism are never discussed. *And Hendel accuses Waltke of religious dogmatism?*

We can turn to the prominent Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen, for this incisive analysis of the mindset of academics regarding the *JEDP* hypothesis:

Not only did Wellhausen [the high priest of *JEDP*] work in a cultural vacuum—that is how he wanted it to be, undisturbed by inconvenient facts from the (ancient) outside world. He resented being pointed toward high antiquity data from Egypt and Mesopotamia...How he hated Egyptologists!... In due course he also lashes out at the Assyriologists... Clearly, he resented any outside impact that might threaten his beloved theses on the supposed development of Israelite religion and history. *And that attitude, one can detect in his equally resistant disciples today.*[\[36\]](#)

Academics and liberals continue to cling onto *JEDP* and its variants with every ounce of strength they can muster. Not only do they tend to isolate themselves from alternative viewpoints, they do not have a shred of evidence to support their pontifications about the authorship of the Pentateuch. Kitchen continues at length:

Here we will be concise, open, and fairly staccato. First, the basic fact is that there is no objective, independent evidence for any of these four compositions [J, E, D, or P] (or any variant of them) anywhere outside the pages of our existing Hebrew Bible. If the criterion of "no outside evidence" damns the existence of such as Abraham, Moses or Solomon and company, then it equally damns the existence of these imaginary works. They exist *only* in the minds of their modern creators...

Our resourceful biblicists are not sitting on some secret store of papyri or parchments that contain any such works. The Dead Sea Scrolls show no sign of them whatever; stubbornly they [the DSS] know only of the canonical works that we have, and of commentaries and "romances" based upon them...Modern guesswork, as we all know, is often extraordinarily and breathtakingly clever and ingenious... But it does *not* constitute fact and cannot substitute for it.

I might choose to dream up a theory that the Ramesside kings of Egypt also once built pyramids in Egypt, twice as big as the Great Pyramid. But absolutely nobody is going to believe me unless I can produce some *tangible, material* evidence in its favor. And we require, likewise, *some* kind of clear, material for a J, E, D, or a P or an H from *outside* of the extant Hebrew

Bible. The standards of proof among biblical scholars fall massively and woefully short of the high standards that professional Orientalists and archaeologists are long accustomed to, and have a right to demand.

### **Some MSS, please!**[\[36\]](#)

*JEDP* and its evil spawn are built on the fairy tale sands of illegitimate and imaginary human autonomy. The list of archaeological discoveries that refute the myriad versions of *JEDP* is enormous. Over a period of 40 years, ABR has done extensive research and written copious materials demonstrating the historical accuracy of the Hebrew Bible which directly contradict dominant and prevailing views on the historical context, antiquity, transmission, preservation and origin of these texts.

Many of these archaeological discoveries prove that the biblical accounts must have been recorded very close to the time or at the time that they occurred. ***The archaeological evidence so precisely fits the Bible in its cultural, chronological and historical context that it is literally impossible for the accounts to have been written centuries later by a myriad of hypothetical editors who have been invented in the fallible minds of anti-theistic critics, and for whom there is not one shred of historical proof whatsoever.*** I have included these references at the end of this article for further reference and study for the Christian and the sincere seeker who may be ready to give up his irrational human autonomy.

### **Conclusion**

I prefaced this article by unapologetically stating that it was my intention to demolish Hendel's arguments and expose his humanistic, anti-God philosophy to the light of day. I admit that my language has been polemical and strong because of the stakes that are involved. The Bible commands us to demolish arguments, *not people*, because they are image bearers of God. *My critique has not been personal.* However, to withhold the hard as nails

truth of the Bible from those who are entrenched in unbelief is not what the Christian is called to do. Van Til writes:

Christians are in themselves no wiser than are other men. What they have they have by grace. They must be 'all things to all men.' *But it is not kindness to tell patients that need strong medicine that nothing serious is wrong with them.* Christians are bound to tell men the truth about themselves; that is the only way of bringing them to recognize the mercy, the compassion, of Christ. For if men are told the truth about themselves, and if they are warned against the false remedies that establish men in their wickedness, then, by the power of the Spirit of God, they will flee to the Christ through whom alone they must be saved.[\[37\]](#)

It is my prayer that Christians will use this article as a resource to help better discern the pervasive man-centered, two-story bias that dominates archaeological and biblical studies, and western culture at large. Christians must work hard to examine this humanistic bias and attempt, when possible, to make skeptics more self-conscious of their biases and the erroneous implications contained therein. In exposing such assumptions, we can more effectively clear the field to sow the seeds of the Gospel.

Hendel's army of straw men has been obliterated. I have been praying that he become willing to give up his untenable human autonomy, and repent and believe that the Son of God paid an unspeakable price[\[38\]](#) to rescue him from judgment and was resurrected from the dead on his behalf.

I have been saved by grace and grace alone. There is nothing within me that merits the unfathomable mercies of Christ. And, there is no greater joy than stepping from the kingdom of darkness into the glorious Kingdom of the Son of God.

Someday soon, I hope that Hendel, and the skeptical reader, will take that magnificent step as well...



## Bibliography

This brief list of articles, detailing many archaeological discoveries, demonstrates that the authors of Scripture had to be eyewitnesses or were in close proximity chronologically to the eyewitnesses of biblical events. These events could never have been invented centuries later with such chronological and historical detail, debunking and destroying the erroneous theories that the Pentateuch and other books of the O.T. were written centuries after the fact by a series of fictional redactors and editors.

[Moses and Hatshepsut](#): The events surrounding the life of Moses fit very well with the Egyptian queen, Hatshepsut.

[The Eyewitness Record from Jericho](#): Multiple points of archaeological evidence fit the biblical narrative in great detail.

[The Eyewitness Record from Ai](#): ABR's original field research at our proposed site of Ai, Khirbet el-Maqatir. Maqatir and the evidence uncovered there fit the 12 criteria found in the Bible very well.

[Testing the Factuality of the Conquest of Ai Narrative in the Book of Joshua](#)

*Recent Research on the Date and Setting of the Exodus*: This 15th century B.C. palace of Pharaoh in the land of Goshen fits the biblical account in Exodus.

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2009/10/19/Recent-Research-on-the-Date-and-Setting-of-the-Exodus.aspx>

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/04/03/The-Royal-Precinct-at-Rameses.aspx>

[Amenhotep II and the Historicity of the Exodus Pharaoh](#): Douglas Petrovich situates the Exodus in the context of Egyptian history with meticulous and exhaustive detail.

*The Wealth and Power of the Biblical Patriarchs:* The patriarchal narratives contain detailed historical and cultural information consistent with extra-biblical history and chronology.

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2009/10/14/The-Wealth-and-Power-of-the-Biblical-Patriarchs.aspx>

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2009/09/09/The-Beni-Hasan-Asiatics-and-the-Biblical-Patriarchs.aspx>

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2009/02/19/Patriarchal-Wealth-and-Early-Domestication-of-the-Camel.aspx>

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2009/03/02/Bronze-Age-Camel-Petroglyphs-In-The-Wadi-Nasib2c-Sinai.aspx>

*Joseph in Egypt:* The historical details recorded in the Genesis narrative of Joseph's life fit the Middle Kingdom period in Egypt precisely.

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/02/18/Joseph-in-Egypt-Part-I.aspx>

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/02/23/Joseph-in-Egypt-Part-II.aspx>

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/03/04/Joseph-in-Egypt-Part-III.aspx>

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/03/15/Joseph-in-Egypt-Part-IV.aspx>

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/04/05/Joseph-in-Egypt-Part-V.aspx>

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/04/09/Joseph-in-Egypt-Part-VI.aspx>

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2009/03/12/The-Joseph-Narrative-%28Gen-372c-39e2809350%29.aspx>

[Sodom and Gomorrah](#): Several pieces of evidence point to a contemporary eyewitness to the momentous events in Genesis 18-19.

[The Silver Scrolls from Ketef Hinnom](#): Containing the Numbers 6 priestly blessing, the oldest known biblical texts from the late 7th/early 6th century B.C. debunk exilic and post-exilic dating for the book of Numbers, and show that the O.T. was in common use in the Israelite community.

[The Name Yahweh in Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts](#)

[Evidence for Inerrancy from an Unexpected Source](#): *Old Testament*

*Chronology*: Rodger Young destroys *JEDP* theories on the chronology of the Kingdom period.

## Footnotes

[1] Humanists and other skeptics regularly use the prejudicial epithet of "fideism" to attack Christians, grossly caricaturing our views. The public comments section on the *BAR* website that contains Hendel's article has several references to Christians being "fideists." Bahnsen has a good list of varied definitions of fideism, such as: 1. "Christian assertions are matters of blind belief and cannot be known or demonstrated to be true." 2. "...religious truths are inaccessible to human reason." 3. "...a pejorative term for subjectivist theories which are based upon religious experience and which undervalue reason in theology." Greg Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetic* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1998), 73. The irony is this: unbelief is fideistic. *Christianity is the only rational position to hold.*

[2] Polemical language against unbelief (which is idolatry) is found ubiquitously among the Old Testament prophets, the Apostle Paul (Galatians 1:6-9; 5:12), and in Jesus' infamous woes to the Pharisees. Martyn Lloyd Jones famously said: "Disapproval of polemics in the Christian Church is a very serious matter... Don't argue about doctrine, let's all be Christians together and talk about the love of God... If you hold that view, you criticize the Apostle Paul, saying that he was wrong, and at the same time you are criticizing the Scriptures. The Scriptures argue, debate, dispute; they are full of polemics." D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: An Exposition of Chapters 3.20-4.25: Atonement and Justification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), 113.

[3] I utilize the term "humanist/humanistic" in this article in a broad sense. Essentially, any philosophy/ worldview about the nature of reality, metaphysics, ethics, truth, reason, faith, knowledge, etc., that views the human mind as the final reference point is humanistic. So, whatever the particular details of Hendel's worldview may be, they are ultimately humanistic because God and His revelation in Scripture are not the final reference point.

[4] Simply put, epistemology is the theory of knowledge: how do we know what we know or claim to know?

[5] Ronald Hendel, "Farewell to SBL: Faith and Reason in Biblical Studies," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, July-August, 2010, pp. 28, 74. Emphasis mine. This article can be found online at: <http://www.bib-arch.org/bar/article.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=36&Issue=04&ArticleID=09&Page=0&UserID=0&>

[6] This philosophy also bifurcates the mind and heart of man as two distinct entities that can have opposing motives, orientation and thought. This is not the biblical doctrine of man at all. For more on man as image of God, as the whole man, see: John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul and Life Everlasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989).

[7] Francis Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason* (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1968). Schaeffer traces the origins of this two-story view of reality all the back to Thomas Aquinas. Space does not permit the lengthy discussion needed here. Briefly, Aquinas made the error of arguing that *natural theology* was possible and that man could, on his own, reason his way to God. Calvin and the Reformers denied this view, and argued that man already knows God through *natural revelation* (Psalm 19; Romans 1:18-32) and the traditional theistic proofs were *a testimony to that which man already knows*. My own view is that Immanuel Kant has been far more influential on modern philosophy and worldviews in this regard than Aquinas, but this is not meant as a criticism of Schaeffer. Most philosophers feel that Kant completely destroyed Aquinas' traditional theistic proofs, so a foundation was built on Kant's thought as a result. Aquinas' traditional theistic proofs are still powerful and useful, but require biblical qualification, which was wholly absent from Aquinas' apologetic methodology. For more on this, see: K. Scott Oliphint, *Reasons for Faith: Philosophy in the Service of Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 3-20.

[8] The philosophical musings of Immanuel Kant are difficult to read for most, and often even hard to summarize. Kant had a profound influence on the last 250 or so years of western thought. For our purposes here, Kant, in essence, split reality into two spheres: the *noumenal* and the *phenomenal*. The *noumenal* is the upper story of the house, the place for faith in God, etc. This realm is completely divorced and cut off from the *phenomenal*, the realities of the physical world. While Kant did not deny the existence of

God *per se*, he was actually denying the God of the Bible with his philosophical pontifications. Post-moderns and other skeptics have taken his philosophy to its logical conclusion and used Kant as a hammer to mock and deny biblical Christianity. His thought cannot be easily summarized, but perhaps this statement is the most helpful: "I have found it necessary to deny knowledge [what I claim to know about the phenomenal] in order to make room for faith [the noumenal]." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's, 1958), 29. For further discussion on Kant and his influence on post-modernism, see: Oliphint, *Reasons for Faith*, 63-73. For a devastating Christian critique of Kant's thought, see chapter 5.3, "The Epistemological Failure of Unbelief," with extensive quotes from Cornelius Van Til in: Bahnsen, 343-58.

[9] Van Til succinctly states: "To be 'without bias' is only to have a particular *kind* of bias. The idea of neutrality is simply a colorless suit that covers a negative attitude toward God." Bahnsen, 127.

[10] I am indebted to Pastor Powell for bringing this useful and insightful term to my attention during his excellent sermon, which can be heard in MP3 format here online: <http://my.ekklesia360.com/Clients/download.php?sid=2319&url=http://www.westvalleypres.org/mediafiles/acts-17-16-34-the-gospel-differentness-in-a-culture-of-nihilism.mp3&mediaBID=624215>

[11] When Van Til refers to "great thinkers among non-Christian men," he is referring to philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and the like. Van Til was well versed with non-Christian philosophy, studying Plato in the original Greek. All the great philosophers knew they could not cover the whole of reality with their knowledge, but, even they put forth philosophies that required exactly that to be vindicated. For a summary of Van Til's critiques of philosophy, see: see chapter 5.3, "The Epistemological Failure of Unbelief" in Bahnsen, 311-404. Bahnsen summarizes: "Van Til identifies the intellectual failures throughout the history of philosophy as illustrations of God's wrath upon the rebellious and arrogant mind of the sinner." Bahnsen, 404, n. 269.

[12] Neutrality, simply stated, is a myth. Skeptics wrongly accuse Christians of being biased, religious dogmatists. Objectivity and neutrality are literally impossible for any person. Objectivity can only be found in an independent,

eternally existent, personal being, i.e., the God of the Bible. For more on objectivity, see Van Til and Bahnsen in Bahnsen, 283-6, 304-7, 423.

[13] Bahnsen, 345.

[14] Implicit in the phrase "personal moral practices" is the notion that Christians have no right to tell others that their moral practices are immoral or wrong. "Keep your morality to yourself and up on the second floor" is the implication and logical consequence of the two story worldview. Naturally, the humanist hypocritically exempts himself from this prohibition, *imposing his morality of silence* on professing Christians and everyone else.

[15] For an excellent exegetical study of some of these passages in Romans 1, see: K. Scott Oliphint, "The Irrationality of Unbelief: An Exegetical Study" in *Revelation and Reason: New Essays in Reformed Apologetics* (P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ), 2007. p. 59-73. After doing my own exegetical study, I have found that Romans 1:18-32 teaches that there are at least 13 points of knowledge that man, by virtue of being an image bearer, already possesses concerning God. They are: 1. The wrath of God is revealed, and therefore known. 2. The knowledge of God is plain. 3. The knowledge of God is plain because God has revealed it. 4. The knowledge of God has been seen and perceived since the creation of the world. 5. The knowledge of God consists of the knowledge of his invisible attributes, his *qeiothV*. 6. The knowledge of God's attributes is perceived internally by all men. 7. This knowledge is so clear as to render man's suppression of it inexcusable. 8. The knowledge of God was not considered worthwhile by all men. 9. Knowing God, all men exchanged him for a lie. 10. Knowing God, all men worshipped and served created things, including themselves. 11. God's wrath is on all men, and they all know it. 12. Knowing God's righteous ordinance, all men disregarded it. 13. All men know they are worthy of death. Calvin referred to this knowledge as the *sensus divinitatis* (sense of deity) and provided what is probably the best articulation of this doctrine in the history of the church. For more, see: John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: Book One, Chapters 1-18*, ed. John T. McNeill (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960, 2006), 35-237.



[16] The psychology of unbelief is invariably complex, as every human being knows God, and at the same time, denies Him. The unbeliever is a walking contradiction. God restrains the full effects of sin within the natural man, allowing him to accomplish a great deal as an image bearer. This is known as the doctrine of common grace. For an excellent exegetical exposition of the doctrine of common grace, see: John Murray, *The Collected Writings of John Murray*: Volume II (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth of Trust, 1977). Murray cites the following Scriptures to support the doctrine of common grace: Gen. 3:22-23; 4:15; 6:3; 20:6; II Kings 19:27-8; I Peter 3:20; Romans 2:4; 13:3-4; Acts 14:16-17; 17:30; Psalm 65:5-13; 104; 136:25; 145:9,15-16; Matthew 5:44-45; I Peter 2:14; I Timothy 2:1-2.

[17] Romans 8:7 is supported by I Corinthians 2:14: "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God [i.e. THE BIBLE], for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." An excellent, in depth study on the irrational nature of unbelieving epistemology can be found in: Richard B. Gaffin Jr., "Epistemological Reflections on I Corinthians 2:6-16," in *Revelation and Reason: New Essays in Reformed Apologetics* (P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, 2007), 13-40.

[18] Vern Poythress, *Redeeming Science* (Wheaton IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 57. Emphasis mine. Poythress continues: "...we desperately need the Bible as part of the remedy for our mental and spiritual corruption. We need instruction from God, not only instruction that is pure and free of our personal and social corruption, but instruction that will serve as a means for our personal and social and political purification. The Bible has both properties: purity (Ps. 12:6; 19:8-9) and purifying power (Ps. 19:7-14; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)."

[19] In recent days, Waltke has become well known for being terminated by Reformed Theological Seminary for his view on the Genesis creation narrative. While succinctly articulating human reason's proper role at the *SBL*, Waltke has, unfortunately, been duped into accepting another dogma of autonomous human reasoning: evolution. Waltke has combined Scripture with a modern scientific belief system that is completely controlled, dominated and tyrannized by the tenets of philosophical naturalism. Waltke

has accepted theistic evolution, which is a product of altering the straightforward teaching found in God's Word concerning the origin of the universe, man, and life on earth, and combining it with the inherently naturalistic, anti-God philosophy of Darwinian evolution. Why Waltke defends the authority of the Bible vs. autonomous human reasoning so well at *SBL*, and fails so miserably regarding Genesis One, is a mystery. I am sure Hendel would applaud Waltke's acceptance of evolution. For an article discussing the situation with Waltke and his unfortunate compromise with evolution, see: Terry Mortenson, "Seminary Prof. Resigns over Pro-Evolution Comments," April 15, 2010. <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2010/04/15/seminary-prof-resigns-pro-evolution>

[20] Hendel, quoting Waltke, 28.

[21] Hendel, 28.

[22] Bahnsen, 716.

[23] A useful summary of Calvin's views on human reason can be found in: Barry G. Waugh, "Reason Within the Limits of Revelation Alone: John Calvin's Understanding of Human Reason," *Westminster Theological Journal*, vol. 72:1, Spring 2010, 1-21.

[24] Hendel, 28.

[25] Hendel, 74. Hendel laments and alleges that *SBL* has fallen into "dissension and hypocrisy." In the materialistic universe of anti-theism, there is no *philosophical justification* for this criticism. Hendel's concern over "dissension and hypocrisy" demonstrates that his philosophy is grossly in error, and his concern is an unwitting affirmation of biblical theism. John Frame writes: "Now, where does the authority of the absolute moral principle come from?...The question concerns the authority of that principle: why should we give to it the enormous respect which we indeed do give to it? Ultimately, only two kinds of answers are possible: the source of absolute moral authority is either personal or impersonal. Consider first the latter possibility: That would mean there is some impersonal structure or law in the universe which sets forth ethical precepts and rightly demands allegiance to them. But what kind of impersonal being could possibly do that? Certainly

if the laws of the universe reduce to chance, nothing of ethical significance could emerge from it. *What of ethical significance can we learn from the random collisions of subatomic particles?* What loyalty do we owe to pure chance?... And the main question here is, *How can an impersonal structure create obligation?*" [\*Apologetics to the Glory of God\*](#). (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1994), 97-98. Emphasis mine.

[26] For over 1000 articles that support biblical creation, see this list assembled by Ashby Camp here: <http://www.trueorigin.org/camplist.asp>

[27] <http://www.trueorigin.org/>. Emphasis mine.

[28] Tommy Mitchell and Monty White write: "So, is evolution observable science? No, evolution falls under the realm of historical science; it is a belief system about the past. How can an evolutionist believe these things without rigorous scientific proof? *The answer is that he wants to.* Evolutionists are quite sincere in their beliefs, but ultimately these beliefs are based on their view that the world originated by itself through totally naturalistic processes. There is a term for this type of belief system—that word is *religion*." *Is Evolution a Religion?*, <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab2/is-evolution-a-religion>

[29] For a brief list of "Scientists alive today who accept the biblical account of Creation," visit: <http://creation.com/scientists-alive-today-who-accept-the-biblical-account-of-creation> . For a list of "Scientists of the past who believed in a Creator," see: <http://creation.com/scientists-of-the-past-who-believed-in-a-creator>

[30] Bahnsen, 280. Emphasis mine.

[31] Bahnsen, 171.

[32] For an excellent discussion on the incompatibility of science and unbelief, see chapter 2, "Why Scientists Must Believe in God: Divine Attributes of Scientific Law" in: Vern Poythress, 13-32. Belief in autonomous physical laws apart from God, Poythress rightly argues, is idolatry. Found online here: [http://www.frame-poythress.org/Poythress\\_books/NAIPoythressRedeemingScience20061017.pdf](http://www.frame-poythress.org/Poythress_books/NAIPoythressRedeemingScience20061017.pdf)

[33] ABR maintains that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, as the Old and New Testaments clearly state. The events of Genesis obviously predate Moses' life. The events recorded therein were possibly passed down in writing, then compiled and edited by Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Rick Lanser writes: " P.J. Wiseman persuasively showed many years ago that Genesis is comprised of discrete sections, separated by *toledoth* phrases like "these are the generations of..." They function as *colophons* - postscripts to what was written immediately before. This structure directly mirrors what is observed in clay tablets from ancient Mesopotamia, where information is given and a colophon is appended at the end. As Wiseman pointed out, this structure indicates that the material in Genesis originally existed as independent records separated by time and often geography, and probably brought together by a later editor - Moses. This view is well summarized by... Curt Sewell in his article, "The Tablet Theory of Genesis Authorship," posted on the True Origin website at <http://www.trueorigin.org/tablet.asp>, and originally published by ABR in the Winter 1994 issue of *Bible and Spade*." Rick Lanser, personal email, July 14, 2010. Lanser is referring to: P.J. Wiseman, *Ancient Records and the Structure of Genesis: A Case for Literary Unity* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985). The other possibility is that Moses received the revelation of the events recorded in Genesis directly from God, perhaps during the 40 days he spent alone on Mount Sinai with only God Himself.

[34] Hendel, 28.

[35] Clyde Billington, "[The Curious History of the 'Editor' in Biblical Criticism](#)," *Artifax*, 2007. This article was republished in the Fall 2009 issue of *Bible and Spade*. Billington shares this great example from his younger days about erroneous arguments from silence propagated by liberal scholars: "I am old enough to have sat in a college class and to have heard a critical professor say that Ezekiel 29:19 was a false prophecy because there was no archaeological evidence that the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar had ever invaded Egypt. This was a foolish argument from silence, and later archaeological evidence from Egypt proved that Nebuchadnezzar had indeed invaded, looted, and devastated the delta area of Egypt. *Critical scholarship*

*has for far too long made use of such arguments from silence."* Emphasis mine.

[36] Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 494. The cultural vacuum of academia (dominated by atheistic, Marxist and post-modernist ideology) isolates scholars like Hendel from diversity of thought. When a scholar, or anyone else for that matter, only interacts with people and peers who have the same worldview, it becomes easy for that person to close their mind to other views that might actually contradict their viewpoint. Kitchen's characterization of Wellhausen is eerily similar to the environment we have today.

[36b] Kitchen, 492. See also: Greg King, "The Documentary Hypothesis" in *The Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 12/1 (2001): 22-30. Found online here: [http://www.atsjats.org/publication\\_file.php?pub\\_id=88&journal=1&type=pdf](http://www.atsjats.org/publication_file.php?pub_id=88&journal=1&type=pdf)

[37] Cornelius Van Til, *The Intellectual Challenge of the Gospel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1953), 40.

[38] I have outlined the unique sufferings of Jesus near the bottom of this online article: [\*Biblical Reflections on the Earthquake in Haiti\*](#), 2010.