

THRIFT AND GENEROSITY: The Joy of Giving by John M. Templeton, Jr. Philadelphia, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2004. 107 pages. Hardcover; \$12.95. ISBN: 1932031715.

This book puts forward the idea that thrift and generosity produce large returns, one of which is joy. Thrift is part of a spiritual and cultural understanding of how time, talents, and resources are used. Thrifty people make careful, thoughtful, wise decisions about how to expend their resources. Generosity is sharing what you have with other people, especially the needy. Thrift can provide the means to practice generosity. The author illustrates these two virtues with quotes from the Bible, literature, philosophy, and daily life.

Templeton includes many trenchant quotes, especially from Benjamin Franklin. Franklin on thrift: "Buy what you have no need of, and before long you will sell your necessities." Generosity enables us "to welcome the weeping widow; to provide for her a place to rest; to dry up her tears; to feed and educate her little orphans, and to put them in a way to gain an honest livelihood."

The quotes in this book provide splendid fodder for a sermon or talk. They alone are worth the price of the book. Templeton uses them to great effect to show that in practicing thrift and generosity "a bit of fragrance always clings to the hand that gives the rose." A life of altruism may be the only way to joy: "When sailing on the Titanic, even first class cannot get you where you want to go." It is worth noting that Jesus said you will be more blessed if you are on the giving rather than the receiving end.

This is a wonderful little book, full of pithy observations, illuminated with many illustrations, touching the heart as well as the purse strings. It points its readers in the direction of finding peace, happiness, and freedom by giving them to other people. The author practices what he advocates. In 1995 he retired from his medical practice to direct the activities of the John Templeton Foundation, an organization whose goal is to encourage the advancement of religious and scientific enterprises.

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Are Patriarchal Ages Factual or Fictional?

Richard Johnson highlights several remarkable patterns in his letter, "Patriarchal Ages in Genesis" (*PSCF* 56, no. 2 [2004]: 152-3), endorsing the conclusions in Carol Hill's article, "Making Sense of the Numbers in Genesis" (*PSCF* 55, no. 4 [2003]: 239-51). Both writers agree that the numbers should be interpreted symbolically, not literally, evidently assuming that while God or inspired bards might contrive lovely patterns, factual ages would be more typical of documented life spans and less aligned with cultural preferences or numerological symbolism. Finding similar patterns hidden in ancient Mesopotamian texts would support the idea that Genesis has fictional and symbolic numbers, but can any evidence be found that they are factual and literal after all?

Consider remarkable patterns of numbers related to US presidents. Only eleven were elected in a year evenly divisible by twenty. Of these, all but the first two and the last two died while in office (Harrison, Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, Harding, Roosevelt, and Kennedy), and these seven all died in a year whose final digit was 1, 3, or 5. Only one other president (Taylor) died in office (in 1850). The sum of the numbers for the month of death of the seven presidents is 49 ($= 7 \times 7$). This is admittedly less impressive than the patterns Johnson noticed, but suppose someone living in the distant future sees patterns in a history of these presidents and concludes that the numbers must be fictional and symbolic. The idea might pass muster if no confirmation of the factuality of the death dates can be found at the time.

Gerald Aardsma may have found just the sort of confirmation of historicity that should be lacking if the Genesis numbers are fictional. Using these numbers, he constructed a chronology stretching all the way back to the creation of Adam ("Toward Unification of Pre-Flood Chronology," *The Biblical Chronologist* 4, no. 4 [1998]: 2). Johnson's pattern observations range from Adam to Moses. Although no events earlier than Noah's flood are likely to have left identifiable and accurately datable vestiges, this event can be dated to a time consistent with the Aardsma chronology, as explained in my earlier letters, "On the Hills of Concordism and Creation Science" (*PSCF* 55, no. 4 [2003]: 278) and "Do Ice Cores Disprove Aardsma's Flood Theory?" (*PSCF* 56, no. 1 [2004]: 76-7). This finding, if it holds up under closer scrutiny, suggests that the numbers are factual, at least from Noah on.

Has anyone noticed that 777, the age of Lamech, is 3333 when written as a base-6 number? How many other base-10 numbers have a similar property? Johnson said his letter did not cover all the patterns he had noticed, so there must be even more, but if the numbers are factual and Aardsma's chronology is correct, then they will be consistent with all verifiable facts, regardless of how improbable or culturally symbolic the number patterns may be. Has any clear inconsistency ever been demonstrated?

Abraham's age (175) heads one of Johnson's patterned lists, but Aardsma claims secular synchronization with his period as well, citing Gen. 13:10 and a modern study of salt caves near the Dead Sea ("Mount Sodom Confirms Missing Millennium," *The Biblical Chronologist* 1, no. 1 [1995]: 1-4). Although further confirmation would certainly help, Aardsma corroborates traditional acceptance of the Genesis numbers as literal, factual ages, favoring the sovereignty and creativity of God (Ps. 139:16; Isa. 40:22-24, 42:5, 46:10-11; Acts 17:24-28) as still the best explanation for patterns.

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Only One

Williams and Dickerson have *not* described two different systems (*PSCF* 56, no. 2 [June 2004]: 102-10). While their pentagram clock has only five settings, any account of prior history (e.g., # revolutions) would provide "infinite" settings as easily as the hypothetical history that supplements the "other" system. Their *example* of modulo 5

arithmetic confuses the issue of whether their “system” is defined by its parameters or by an infinitely expandable record of arbitrary signals interacting with the system. Modulo 5 addition has an explicit goal of *discarding* higher order information in favor of repeating a count; it is no different from the clock. In modulo 5, the series of 0, 5, 10, 15, ... is “infinite” only in the trivial sense that the series 0, 0, 0, 0 ... is “infinite.” If we discard one clock’s history and compare it to the “infinite” potential history of another, infinity appears to “equal” five. It is almost a good card trick. But, in fact, the authors’ two systems are the same.

Contrastingly, Abba’s record is intact, inherent, and (humanly) irreducible. Triune *theory* is the entity that is modulo-like, for it forgets that higher order information exists (e.g., only Abba knows when the Son of Man will return; Matt. 24:36). The two real “systems” are not “equal” or “consubstantial” in their “substance.” One is greater, just as Jesus repeatedly said (e.g., John 14:28).

The authors apologize for the model’s limitations by bowing to paradox. If paradox is the appeal, consider the *original* version: Elohim made humankind in his image. Even so, he cannot be described or likened to *anything*. No image of him can be made, no attribute encompassed. This includes his metaphysical “substance.” Some people refused to accept the paradox; they decided God is Jesus the Messiah, that Elohim is the second Adam, that the *icon* of God—double-click and the program opens—is *the program*. But if anything finite can be a “fullness” of infinity, then perhaps, like the authors’ models, we are all “full” of the things we have forgotten, and perhaps we are all divine—at least as much as Athanasius, who advocated that Christ *had* to pay an “infinite” price or he (Athanasius) could not become God Almighty.

How many can recite Jesus’ answer to the question, “Who is this ‘Son of Man’?” (John 12:34). Why did Jesus recite, “Ye are gods”? (John 10:34, Ps. 82). If “God in Jesus” equals incarnation, what does “Jesus in us” equal? (John 14:20). Contemporary Trinity forgets dozens of such verses, while fourth century Trinity is blatantly self-glorifying; both are illogical. Is the *logos* to be defined in *illogos*—logic by illogic, reason by the incomprehensible, words by hand-waves? Few concepts are as antithetical to science or the Gospel.

Since Jesus is the first-fruit—the first born into the Resurrection—the beginning of the new Creation, what does *beginning* mean? Is Jesus the foreordained Messiah who existed prior to his “begetting”? Yes, but Paul tells us “begetting” (*yalad*) refers to the *resurrection* of the man Jesus (Acts 13:33, Ps. 2). The word *beginning* means both less and more than Trinity presumes.

Newton decided Trinity is a fraud. This remains the logical and consistent conclusion on the matter. Williams and Dickerson imply disbelief by Isaac in regard to the “miraculous and mysterious” (p. 104). But others degrade Newton for suggesting that God adjusts his clockworks. Which is it? Is Newton’s God too tiny or too big, too distant or too close? Which caricature makes Trinity right?

Trinity is *still* without mathematical blessing, congruent with its lack of scriptural vocabulary or clear support. It is short on mere (non-fraudulent) scriptural *hints* that can be “taken” in its favor, yet foundered in opposing

verses, tainted by paganism, surrounded at every stage by controversy, bloodshed, and persecution and completely without a logical, sensible, or comprehensible foundation. Superstition is about forgetting the real question and focusing on fantastic speculations; science and Christianity are antithetical to this. Oh barbarian brothers in Christ! Why do you call our master “Good”? Only God our Father is Good (Matt. 19:17); only God is God.

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Old Glaciers

Derek Eshelbrenner’s Letter (*PSCF* 56, no. 2 [June 2004]: 156–7) on Paul Seely’s article about Greenland’s Ice Glacier was entertaining but did not have much depth to it. Derek indicates that the Greenland Ice Glacier might have floated in one spot during the six months or more of the Genesis flooding. I am sure Derek has not thought it through, how high the Greenland glacier would have had to float as it hovered over Greenland Island during the turbulent Genesis flooding.

The Genesis story says that the flood water “... prevailed so mightily upon the earth that all the HIGH mountains ...” were covered by fifteen cubits of water. Nine out of the ten highest peaks in the world reside in the Himalaya range and climb up to 29,035 feet for Mt. Everest. From the Genesis story, the flood waters would have had to top Mt. Everest, so Greenland’s glacier hovered for six months at about 5½ miles high above Greenland’s island. That would be quite a feat and I am sure not impossible for God to do. But if God did that for this old Glacier, he would have done it for all of the other old glaciers in the world.

Most people do not realize that there are over 71,000 glaciers that are currently being monitored by the World Glacier Monitoring Service, WGMS.¹ Most of these glaciers are known as short timers, a few thousand years, but there are many that are showing to be very old by the process of cutting deep Ice Cores into them.² The Bolivian ice cores indicate a 25,000 year tropical climate history³ and it goes up to 220,000 years before present [1995] at the Vostok Station in Antarctica⁴ and the most recent analyses, 1997, of the Guliya Ice Cap in the Kunlun Shan Mountains of western China suggest a record of more than 500,000 years old.⁵

I for one do not understand why God would keep a 200,000 year old glacier floating above one spot of the earth during the Genesis flood and then drop it back down on the island it came from? How would that show that we live on a very young earth?

I would think the very evidence that there are many glaciers that are from 25,000 years up to 500,000 years old completely destroys the very concept of this earth being only 6,000 years old. Derek admits that there is no evidence for a worldwide Genesis flood but hopes that “science” will “demonstrate that a global flood did occur.” The problem with Derek is he does not realize that “science” has already accumulated tons of evidence that “demonstrate that a global flood” could not ever have happened in the last 200,000 years. Every year archaeolo-