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Genesis

Lesson 8
The Apparent Age Theory (Part 1)
Genesis 1:1-31

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Apparent Age theory has been the general position of the historic Christian Church. It is still held by most conservative Bible scholars in the 20th century, and it is the position of the author of these notes on Genesis.

B. Those who hold to the Apparent Age theory are not popular in the so-called age of science. Those who take this theory stand in line for being called naive Bible believers, who have never been able to free themselves from medieval ignorance and prejudice. But since no theory has been set forth which gives a satisfactory answer to the problem of origins this author chooses to stay with the normal meaning of the Biblical text and accept it as written. There is really no strong evidence Biblically or scientifically to cause one to give up a literal interpretation of Genesis 1:1-31.

C. Those who accept the Apparent Age theory believe that God has revealed in the Bible truth concerning original creation, and only He could know what really happened because He was there. By faith, the biblical Christian believes that God created the world as stated in Genesis 1 (cf. Heb. 11:3). NOTE: Apparent Age theorists almost always have a high viewpoint of the inspiration of Scripture, believing that the very words in the original manuscripts were inspired of God.

II. DEFINITION OF THE APPARENT AGE THEORY: This view holds that God created the world in six literal 24-hour solar days, and that the basic facts of geology and paleontology can be attributed to original creation by apparent age and biblical catastrophism.

III. GRAMMATICAL AND EXEGETICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF GENESIS 1:1-2

A. Genesis 1:1: This states that God created (*bara*). The Hebrew word *bara* means, in this context, that God created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing); that is, God created the universe without pre-existent material. Genesis 1:1 gives an all-inclusive statement that God is Creator of heaven and earth. The rest of Genesis 1 explains how God created the universe, giving special attention to the earth. Morris says,

After the initial creation “from nothing” of space (“the heavens”) and matter (“the earth”), with time itself (“the beginning”), God proceeded to bring form to the shapeless earth, initially blanketed in water and darkness, and then inhabitants to its silent surface. (*Science, Scripture and Salvation*)

B. Genesis 1:2; Genesis 1:2 appears to be related to Genesis 1:1 in a loose grammatical connection in order to give a geocentric (earth centered) emphasis to the verse. Edward 3. Young states,

It is true that the second verse of Genesis does not represent a continuation of the narrative of verse one, but as it were, a new beginning. Grammatically it is not construed with the preceding, but with what follows. Nevertheless by its introductory words, “and the earth,” it does take up the thought of the first verse. It does this however, by way of exclusion. No longer is our thought to rest upon heaven and earth, the entirety of created phenomena, but merely upon earth” (Westminster Theological Journal).

1. The words *tohu* (desolation) and *bohu* (waste) speak of an earth that could not be inhabited. The earth was in such a condition that man could not live on it. It was a desolation and a waste
2. It states that “darkness was upon the face of the deep” and the reference here is not to oceans but to the primeval waters that covered the earth. Up until the time of Genesis 1:9 the earth had actually been covered or surrounded by water.
3. It indicates that the Spirit of God moved (hovered) over the waters, showing God’s sovereign control in creation. Actually verse two does not picture a disordered chaos as many hold. Young comments,

If then we employ this word “chaos” we must use it only as indicating the first stage in the formation of the present well-ordered earth and not as referring to what was confused and out of order, as though to suggest that the condition described in Genesis 1:2 was somehow out of God’s control. All was well ordered and precisely as God desired it to be.

IV. DAYS OF CREATION ARE SOLAR DAYS OF 24-HOURS

- A. Hermeneutics. It is a basic principle of interpretation that the primary use of a word should be considered unless context would give reason for ruling otherwise. The basic use of “day” in the Old Testament is a solar day.
- B. Lexical Use. The Hebrew dictionaries give the primary use of “day” a 24 hour.
- C. Used With a Numeral. Whenever “day” is used with a definite number (numerical adjective) it always refers to a 24-hour day.
- D. Evening and Morning. In Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23 the words “evening and morning” are used by the author to express normal days.
- E. Exodus 20:8-1. This passage seems to demand a literal 24-hour day when it links the six days of divine creative activity with the seventh day of rest with Israel’s six days of labor and then a Sabbath day for rest. Obviously Israel’s six days of labor were 24-hour days; thus the six days of Genesis 1, used as an example, must likewise be of a 24-hour duration.
- F. Language of Immediate Creation. Sarburg, author of *Darwin, Evolution, and Creation* says,

The wording of the Genesis account seems to indicate a short time for the creative acts described. To illustrate, in Genesis 1:11 God literally commands, “Earth sprout, sprouts!” Immediately v. 12 records prompt response to the command—“The earth cause the plants to go out” The Genesis account nowhere even hints that eons of periods of time are involved.

- G. Brings More Glory to God. A 24-hour day would be most glorifying to a God of infinite creative power. So easily and so quickly does God create! To speak of such a God creating only slowly, through long age-days, detracts from His almighty ability.
- H. Compared With Scripture. Creation, when treated elsewhere in the Bible, is treated as compact history, not long drawn out history Matt. 19:4; 2 Pet. 3:5).
- I. Tradition. The normal day seems to be the historic view of the church although a few scholars wrestled with the problem in the past.
- J. Modern Hebrew Scholars. Many modern, conservative Hebrew scholars hold to a 24-hour view of creation.
- K. Fear of Evolution. This argument, while it may not valid, assumes that does not hold to a literal solar day, then he leaves himself wide open to believe in evolution. The result is that one holds to solar days because of fear of evolution.