

Lesson 11

THE EVOLUTIONARY THEORY ON THE AGE OF THE EARTH IS NOT TENABLE

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Evolution is a theory not a fact. What folks fail to understand is that science has solved none of the basic problems of existence such as origins, gravity, light, atoms, life, etc. True science and the Bible will never contradict.
- B. All science is based on hypothesis and is always subject to change based on new information. Therefore, science can never set forth absolute truth. The scientific method can produce data that has the appearance of truth, but it is only relative truth that is subject to change with further testing. It cannot be denied that science produces facts, whether right or wrong, and these facts must be dealt with adequately by the biblical interpreter.

II. UNIFORMITARIANISM, THE BASIS FOR ALL INORGANIC EVOLUTION

- A. Definition: Uniformitarianism is an assumption that physical causes and effects in all ages have been only and always the same as those which we observe today.
- B. Reason: Evolutionists assume uniformitarianism because it is essential for their system. An evolutionist needs an old earth to support his theory that there is evolution from one species to another. Most evolutionists believe that for a species to arise takes at least five hundred million years. They work on the theory that given enough time anything can happen.
- C. Results: Uniformitarianism has permitted geologists to put together a geologic column, which includes various types of earth layers or strata. The first layer was deposited about a billion years ago, and subsequent layers at intervals of hundreds of millions of years. During these long periods, organic evolution somehow took place producing various types of plants and animals. Consequently, in the lower strata we find fossil remains of simple forms of life, and in the top-most layers the more complex. The geologic column beginning with the oldest to the youngest is: *Archaean* (undatable), *Cambrian* (1,000,000,000 years), *Ordovician* (900,000,000 years), *Silurian* (800,000,000 years), *Devonian* (700,000,000 years), *Carboniferous* (600,000,000 years), *Permian* (500,000,000 years), *Triassic* (400,000,000 years), *Jurassic* (300,000,000 years), *Cretaceous* (200,000,000 years), *Tertiary* (100,000,000 years), *Pleistocene* (10,000,000 years) and *present*. NOTE: Beginning somewhere in the Cambrian period, primitive life had its beginnings and then life evolved through sea life, reptiles, mammals and then man. According to the evolutionists, man is at least 10 million years old.
- D. Objections To Uniformitarianism
 - 1. It is pure assumption that all things have been uniform, for science really does not know one way or the other.
 - 2. There is no place on the whole earth where all the geologic column can be seen as a unit. In fact, there is no spot where more than two or three layers are found one above the other.
 - 3. The order of the strata is not the same in all places where they are found lying one above the other. In fact, in many places there is an upside down condition of rocks. Sometimes the oldest strata is found on the top level.
 - 4. The real fallacy of the system is that fossils are first arranged according to the strata in which they are found and the strata are then arranged according to the

fossils found in them. Or in other words, they date the fossils by the strata and the strata by the fossils!

5. **Biblical Warning (2 Peter 3:3-5):** Christians have been told that in the last days men will reject the Second Coming of Christ based on uniformitarian reasoning.

III. EVOLUTIONARY THEORY ON THE AGE OF THE EARTH

A. **Introduction:** Some evolutionists have placed the age of the earth at 4.5 billion years old. Some who are more conservative speak of the world to be only 12 million years old. Whatever methods they use to date the earth, they are all based on uniformitarianism.

B. **Outmoded Methods of Dating the Earth**

1. **Cooling of the Earth's Crust:** Assuming that the crust of the earth was once molten, an estimate of the time required for it to cool to its present state of temperature can be made. An answer of a few billion years is obtained.
OBJECTION: Assuming creation, God could have created the earth without the molten process, or at various stages of cooling.
2. **Salinity of the Ocean:** The present amount of salt in the oceans and the rate at which salt has been carried to the oceans allows calculations which give an age for the oceans of the order of a billion years. OBJECTION: Why could not have God made the sea salt from the beginning?
3. **Sedimentation of Rocks:** The rate at which igneous rocks (rocks crystallized from molten materials) have been changed into sedimentary rocks yields an estimated age for the earth of a few billion years. OBJECTIONS: (1) God in the original creation could have made igneous rocks and sedimentary rocks all at once with the appearance of age. (2) It can be proven that even now sedimentation does not take place at the same rate all over the earth. Climate and environmental conditions are definite factors.
4. **Recession of the Moon:** The moon is gradually moving away from the earth. Studies of the rate of this movement coupled with the assumption that the man started from a position very close to the earth yield a time of some few billion years ago for the beginning process. OBJECTION: They must assume the origin, position of the moon to the earth. When God created the universe He could have put the moon at any distance from the earth and the rate of movement at one time could have been greater than it is now.
5. **Speed of Light:** Mathematically it is possible to calculate the time it takes light to travel from distant stars to earth and it amounts to millions of years.
OBJECTION: God who made the stars could have made the light to fall on the earth at the moment of creation. Also God could have speeded up the light to any degree He chose.

C. **Popular Methods of Dating the Earth**

1. **Radio-active Dating:** Radioactivity is a process in which certain elements spontaneously give off rays and particles and are thereby changed into other elements which are called decay products or daughter elements. This process serves as a time clock because the rate of decay is quite regular and is not influenced by environmental forces such as heat, light or pressure. The rate of decay for each radioactive element can be accurately determined. Some of the radioactive dating methods are uranium turning to lead, uranium turning to helium or potassium turning to argon. By this method, scientists have claimed the earth to be over five billion years old.
OBJECTIONS
 - a. One must assume that no part of the daughter element was originally in the rock. Yet the same God who created the mother element could have put the daughter element in the rock at the same time.
 - b. All the common minerals of igneous rocks except quartz weather readily.

- c. Elements may enter a rock through time such as oxygen, water and carbon dioxide, which would affect the dating, process.
 - d. A world flood, as the Bible claims, would have had a tremendous effect upon mixing the elements in rocks.
2. RadioCarbon Dating (Carbon 14): Carbon 14 is radioactive carbon and forms with oxygen (O₂) forming carbon dioxide (CO₂). It is then absorbed by the waters of the earth and is used by growing plants. In the plants it becomes a part of the structure. Animals that feed upon the plants also take C14 into their structure. Carbon 14 is one of the several radioactive materials, which our own body contains. As soon as a living thing dies, fresh Carbon 14 is no longer taken into it and the radiocarbon begins to lessen. Thus the older the organic material the less the radiocarbon left in it.

OBJECTIONS:

- a. It has to be assumed that the amount of Carbon 14 and CO₂ is no longer taken into it and the radiocarbon begins to lessen. Thus the older the organic material the less the radiocarbon left in it.
- b. Assuming the biblical record to be accurate, it speaks of a water vapor enveloping the earth at the original creation (Gen. 1:7; 2:6). The water canopy would have certainly filtered out much of the Carbon 14. If the water vapor fell on the earth during the Flood, it would seem reasonable to assume the cosmic radiation really began as we know it today at that point. This would cut the things dated by radiocarbon to practically nothing.
- c. From science and from the Biblical record, we have much reason to believe that the earth had luxuriant vegetation. This would definitely affect the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. It is not unreasonable to question whether all things have been uniform.
- d. Carbon 14 dating is only reliable up to around 25,000 years. POINT: H. Enoch says,

Thus to the question how old is the earth or how old is a particular fossil, no reliable scientific answer can be given. There is no dependable method of dating which can scientifically prove the correct or even approximate age of rock more than 4 to 5,000 years! (*Evolution or Creation*, p. 36).

IV. CREATIONIST ANSWERS TO THE EVOLUTIONISTS ON THE AGE OF THE EARTH

- A. Rejection of Uniformitarianism: Uniformitarianism is not provable by observable processes. It is simply a theology that has never been proved. The real age of the earth is open to dispute.
- B. Appearance of Age: Since God created by a direct act, this necessitates the appearance of age (i.e. Adam and Eve were created as adults, not children; they had the appearance of age even though in time they were young). NOTE: At this point, an evolutionist might say that God has deceived us if things have an appearance of age. John C. Whitcomb, Jr., answers this problem:

To this rather common objection, we need only reply that God has not deceived us in such matters if He has given us a Book to tell us what He has done. We have no one to blame but ourselves if we reject the written record of His creative and miraculous works in history. (*Creation According to God's Word*, p. 8).

- C. Gaps in Genealogies: Based on a strict interpretation of the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11, the Anglican Archbishop Ussher, around 1650 AD placed the age of the earth about 6,000 years with the date of creation being 4004 BC. This date was placed in

the King James Bible about 1701 A.D. Ussher came to this position by adding up the life spans of the men listed in Genesis 5 and 11 as well as in other parts of the Old Testament, tracing it back to Adam. NOTE: Actually, the Hebrew manuscripts of Genesis carry no date of creation. Neither the scientist nor the creationist can fix the date of the beginning. NOTE: Perhaps there are great gaps in the genealogies. They may not be based on father-son relationships. Moses did not need to list every person in the direct line. Also it is not explicitly stated anywhere the lists are given for the purpose of enabling us to compute the age of the earth. Archer states,

The genealogies recorded only the most prominent members of the ancestry of Abraham, omitting an undetermined number of links (although presumably not as many links as actually are named in the lists concerned). A variation of this view would construe the formula "A begot B" as meaning either B himself or some unnamed ancestor of B (perfectly allowable in Hebrew parlance, since grandfathers are occasionally said to have begotten their grandsons; at least Bilhah's grandsons are spoken of as her sons in 1 Chron. 7:13). The ages of the patriarchs who lived several centuries (even 900 years or more) would be understood as the actual lifetime of the individuals named. (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*).

POINT: The gaps in the genealogies may allow the Bible scholar to go back as far as ten to twenty thousand years as the original date of creation.

- D. CONCLUSION: Creationists cannot be sure of the earth's age, but the evidence rests with the fact that the earth is very young.

V. WHY IS EVOLUTION SO POPULAR?

- A. The thinking of the day is secular rather than Biblical and evolution is attractive to the secular world.
- B. Science has become almost a god for many people and they are offended if the system of evolution is ever challenged.
- C. There are very few people really challenging the theory of evolution on a factual basis. Most Christians avoid the problem or fight it on an emotional basis.
- D. Some scientists accept the theory because they are convinced the evidence supports it. Others prefer any theory that frees them from the necessity of introducing the supernatural into science by accepting a creative act of God. But it is also true that many accept it because it is the ruling theory in the branch of science in which they work. It is professional suicide for most scientists to challenge the evolutionary theory.