

Lesson 13

THE APPARENT AGE THEORY IS MORE BIBLICAL

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. While the Apparent-age theory has been the dominant view of most Christians throughout the history of the Church, it is not a very popular view in the 20th century. Those who hold this view do so because they are committed to a high viewpoint of the inspiration of scripture and believe the Bible to be the only and final rule of faith and practice.
- B. The Bible was not written to be a textbook on science, but it was written to be a book of religion or redemption. There is much about science that scripture says nothing about. However, when the Bible does speak on some scientific matter, it is infallible, for God is the final authority on all things in creation, whether it deals with history, geology, anthropology, astronomy or any other sciences.
NOTE: It is amazing how scientifically accurate the Bible is: the number of stars are as the grains of sand on the seashore (Jer. 33:22); the earth is hung upon nothing (Job 26:7); the earth is round (Isa. 40:22); there is bacteria (Lev. 11:29-36; Deut. 23:12-14).
- C. The only person who could tell us something about the ultimate origin of earth is someone who was there to observe original creation. God was at the original creation and He has given us an accurate account of it in Genesis (Job 38:4).
NOTE: You may say that Moses wrote Genesis, not God. True, but God spoke to Moses about the creation. Only one who was there could give an accurate account of creation and Moses was writing under divine inspiration. NOTE: By faith the Biblical Christian believes that God created the world as stated in Genesis 1 (Heb. 11:3).
- D. Those who hold to the Apparent-age theory are not popular in the so-called age of science. These who take this theory stand in line for being called naïve Bible-believers, who have never been able to free them 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 texts and accept it as written. There is really no overwhelming evidence Biblically or scientifically to cause one to give up a literal interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2.

II. DEFINITION OF THE APPARENT-AGE THEORY: This view is that God created the world in six literal 24-hour solar days, and that the basic facts of geology and paleontology can now be attributed to original creation by apparent age and Biblical catastrophism. The world, while it has the appearance of being very old, is in reality very young, for when God creates He does so by things having the appearance of age.

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. Henry Morris states,

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 1:1 in a loose grammatical connection in order to give a geocentric (earth centered) emphasis to the verse. Edward J. Young says,

It is true that the second verse of Genesis one 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 “without form and void” actually mean “in desolation (*tohu*) and waste (*bohu*)” and describe 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 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 also 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.

- C. Conclusion: Genesis 1:1-2 tells us that God is the Creator of TIME (“in the beginning”), SPACE (“God created the heaven”), MATTER (“and the earth”), FORCE (“and the Spirit of God”), and MOTION (“moved”).

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” as 24-hours.
- C. Day 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, and 23 the words “evening and morning” are used by the author to express normal days. NOTE: The most casual reader would understand this to mean solar days.
- E. Exodus 20:8-11: 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 of 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: Raymond Sarburg 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 caused the plants to go out.” The Genesis account nowhere even hints that eons of periods of time are involved. (*Darwin, Evolution and Creation*)

- 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: Most modern, conservative Hebrew scholars hold to a 24-hour view of creation.
- K. Fear of Evolution: This argument, while it may not be valid, assumes that if one 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 a fear of evolution.

- V. THE ISSUE OF VERBAL-PLENARY INSPIRATION AND SPIRITUALIZATION: Every person who holds to an apparent-age theory also believes strongly in verbal-plenary inspiration of scripture. He believes the Bible to be true and Genesis 1 and 2 to be actual recorded history. If he spiritualizes Genesis 1 and 2, then he leaves the door wide open to spiritualize any other historical part of the Bible. A person accepts the Apparent-age theory because it seems to be the truest position to the Bible. However, he does realize that there are some problems in his system, but he feels like it is more important to be true to the facts of the Bible than to capitulate in any way to the apparent (not always proven) facts of science.

