



Challenge



"...but try the spirits whether they are of God..." (1 Jno. 4:1)

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Editorial...

My last editorial sparked off a little controversy with Dan Barker because of my statement about "The Atheist Agenda." Mr. Barker took it upon himself to convince me that there was no atheist agenda that most atheists are happy to live and let live. He tried to tell me that many atheists are happy to see people going to church, but then he closed that paragraph with the following statement "Most atheists, however, view the belief in a god as irrational, and even dangerous." Now how could atheists be happy to see people attending church if they believe that belief in God is irrational and even dangerous?

There is an old saying "When you throw a rock into a crowd of people, the one who cries out is the one you hit." I surmise that my statement about the Atheist Agenda hit Dan Barker, and it must have hit him pretty hard too because his final words to me were to take him off of the *Challenge* mailing list. I informed him that I would gladly do so, that the only reason I had him on it in the first place was because I was taking his Bible Quiz, and I wanted him to see my answers. Apparently he doesn't want to see them. At any rate, he has agreed to a possible debate with me, if I can get one going, but he hopes that I am going to be subject to change in beliefs. Well, as I have told Farrell Till and every other atheist I have debated "show me the evidence, and we'll talk, until then, don't get your hopes up." However, if his evidence is no better than what he has in his quiz and what he had in his debate with Kyle Butt, he can

forget about changing me. I am not that easy!

I continue to believe that the atheist agenda is to rid society of any semblance of God. The group "The Atheist Agenda" which is described by Wikipedia is far from just a few atheists, and they are doing more than just living and letting live. They are holding aggressive demonstrations, exchanging Bibles for pornography (you turn in your Bible they will give you pornography), and they are all across the nation. Look at the following URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Atheist_Agenda

You go to the internet and look at the number of atheistic websites and organizations. You will find Internet Infidels, who have their Internet Infidels Debate Board, Farrell Till's Errancy List, Todd Greene's atheist email discussion list, The No God list, and many, many others. I was told in no uncertain terms by some on the God Busters list to leave that I was not wanted. These are just a few that I know about. I could get more, if I tried. The atheist does have an agenda, don't let him tell you that they don't. Dennis McKinsey used to put out a paper called *Biblical Errancy*, in that paper one of his subscribers bragged about (Continued on p. 2)

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interrupting a church picnic in St. Charles, MO trying to teach the people there that there was no God. No agenda? Right! You bet there's an agenda, they just don't want it exposed. They want to be able to go around

filling our minds with their atheistic doctrines under the guise that they are teaching science and rationality, common sense. What they don't want is someone to let the public know what they are doing.

Dating in Archaeology: Challenges to Biblical Credibility

Garry K. Brantley, M.A., M.Div.

Reprint from Apologetics Press...

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second of a two-part series on "Dating in Archaeology." [Part I](#) is titled "Dating in Archaeology: Radiocarbon and Tree-Ring Dating."]

Biblical historical data are accurate to an extent far surpassing the ideas of any modern critical students, who have consistently tended to err on the side of hypercriticism" (1949, Albright, p. 229). "Archaeologists now generally agree that their discoveries...have produced a new consensus about the formation of ancient Israel that contradicts significant parts of the biblical version" (Strauss, 1988).

These statements represent the conflicting messages that characterize the field of archaeology. In Albright's era, archaeologists' interpretations of field excavations ordinarily corroborated biblical information. It was common for prominent archaeologists such as Nelson Glueck to confidently affirm: "...no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference" (1959, p. 31).

Prior to the 1970s, interpretations of archaeological explorations generally heightened the Bible's credibility (Davis, 1993, 19[2]:54-59). Since then, however, the amiable relationship between archaeology and the Bible has deteriorated dramatically. It is commonplace for the new generation of archaeologists to spurn the historical credibility of the biblical narrative (see Dever, 1990, 16[3]:52-62).

Archaeology, therefore, presents a challenge to those who contend for the integrity of the Scriptures. How are we to respond? On what basis do many archaeologists repudiate the historicity of the biblical text, and how reliable are their methods? To answer these and other questions we must have a basic understanding of the science of archaeology.

A "MOUND" OF EVIDENCE

An archaeologist is not a modern "Indiana Jones" searching for exotic treasures in booby-trapped caverns. His expeditions are carefully-planned pursuits, including a highly-trained staff of scientists from various disciplines.

Though much surface exploration occurs, we often associate archaeology with excavation. Most excavations involve a "tell," which is the Arabic word for "mound." More descriptively, the word traces back to the Babylonian *tillu*, which meant "ruin heap" (Albright, 1949, p. 18). Similar to the Indian mounds of North America, tells are artificial hills composed of the cultural remains (e.g., pottery, tools, weapons, statues) from different settlements on the same site.

Stratification—the Making of a Tell

The cross section of a tell resembles a layer cake, with each layer representing an

occupational level. These mounds were not formed merely by the natural drifting of sands, or by the gradual accumulation of debris. Though these were factors, catastrophes such as war, fire, or earthquake destroyed a settlement. Then, new settlers leveled the ground, and rebuilt on the same site. The layer of debris from the previous city formed a stratum, which generally measured from about one to five feet thick (Free, 1969, pp. 6-7). This caused the ground level of the new settlement to be several feet higher than the previous one. Also, the cultural remnants of the older settlement lay underneath the new.

Over the years, this process was repeated until several successive strata were formed, and the mound rose higher. As the height of the mound rose, the occupational area generally decreased (though sometimes the reverse occurred; Albright, 1949, p. 17). When the site was finally abandoned, wind and rain leveled the top and eroded the sides, until a city wall or other structure halted the erosion process. The shape of these mounds resembles a truncated cone (see Unger, 1954, pp. 19-21). Most important biblical sites have this characteristic form, which trained archaeologists readily recognize.

Excavation and Dating

Once a tell has been identified, then comes the arduous and fastidious task of excavation. There is more to excavating one of these

mounds than merely removing each successive occupational layer, since artifacts from one stratum can intrude into another level. Archaeologists, therefore, have developed methods that help them identify artifacts with their proper stratum (see Kenyon, 1957a, pp. 75-80; LaSor, 1979, 1:237-240). These methods also assist them in developing a sequential chronology of the tell, since artifacts from the top layer represent the most recent civilization and the bottom layer represents the oldest. But how do they assign **specific** dates to these levels?

Often, and especially for ancient dates, radiocarbon and dendrochronology (i.e., tree-ring dating) are employed, whose deficiencies have been well-documented (see Major, 1993). For more recent dates, archaeologists generally rely on a sophisticated dating system based upon pottery, which is used extensively in Syro-Palestinian archaeology. Sir Flinders Petrie (1853-1942), the famed Egyptologist, first introduced this method, and William Albright, the distinguished American archaeologist, refined it further. Pottery serves well for dating purposes for at least two reasons: (1) it was relatively inexpensive, and thus plentiful; and (2) pottery styles underwent frequent changes (see LaSor, 1979, 1:241-242; Laughlin, 1992; Wood, 1988). This system associates the marked changes of pottery styles with different archaeological ages (see Figure 1).

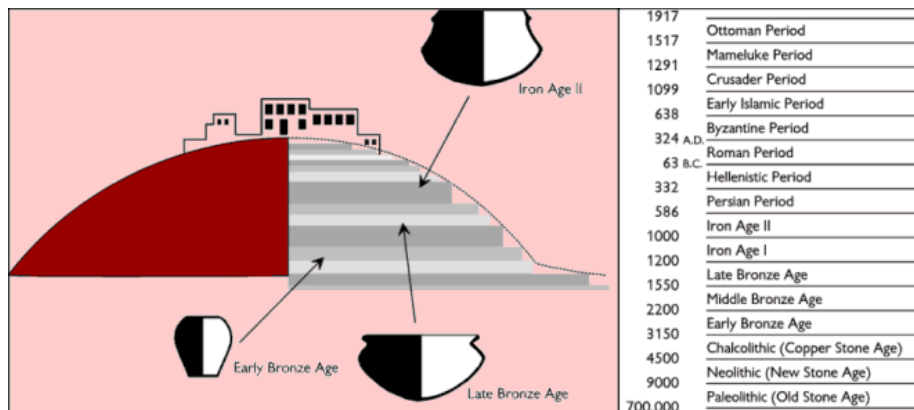


Figure 1: Cross section through an idealized tell showing pottery types, and successive layers of settlement from ancient to modern times. The evolutionary-based archaeological timescale on the right comes from Silberman (1989).

How do pottery types date the strata from which they are unearthed? Suppose workers discover a cooking pot with relatively straight sides, a row of holes just below the rim, and a rope decoration below the holes. According to pottery typology, this kind of vessel was dominant in the Middle Bronze Age (c. 2000-1500 B.C.; Laughlin, 1992, 18[5]:73). Thus, if a sufficient amount of such vessels is found in a level of a tell, an archaeologist will date the stratum between the years 2000-1500 B.C.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY

This pottery-based dating scheme has proved to be helpful in assigning general dates to occupational levels of a mound. Further, the dates determined by this scheme often coincide with biblical chronology. For instance, excavators at Shiloh have dated a destruction level on that site at 1050 B.C., which corresponds with the battle of Ebenezer recorded in 1 Samuel 4 (cf. Jeremiah 7:12; Albright, 1949, p. 228). Such finds (and there are many) confirm the historical data of the biblical text. However, archaeologists' interpretations based upon this dating scheme often conflict with biblical chronology. Consider two examples. **The Age of the Earth**

First, there is a discrepancy between the archaeological and biblical estimations of the Earth's age. The chronologies supplied with the genealogies from Adam to Abraham prohibit the Earth from being as old as the archaeological timescale indicates. While it is true that genealogical records occasionally may contain gaps, this does not negate the force of the chronologies attached to them. If Seth were, for example, a distant relative of Adam, nevertheless, Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born (Genesis 5:3). We cannot dismiss *a priori* biblical chronology simply by assuming genealogical gaps.

The archaeological timescale indicates a Paleolithic era which dates back to 700,000 years ago. Further, archaeologists generally recognize a Neolithic settlement at Tell es-Sultan (Jericho) which dates to about 8000 B.C. (Wood, 1990, 16[2]:45). Since the Flood would have destroyed any orderly remains of antediluvian civilizations, the remnants of

ancient societies preserved in mounds (as those at Jericho) most likely accumulated **after** the Flood (Vaninger, 1985a, 20:34). Such a timetable forces the Creation back several thousand more years than allowed by biblical chronology. **Conquest of Canaan**

Second, biblical and archaeological dates of some historical events are in conflict. A classic example of this chronological tension is the conquest of Canaan. The Bible indicates that 480 years transpired between the exodus and the fourth year of Solomon's reign (1 Kings 6:1). We can date his reign with reasonable confidence at 971-931 B.C., which places the date of his fourth regnal year at 967 B.C. This would place the date of the exodus at 1447 B.C. Allowing for the 40 years of wilderness wandering prior to the Israelites' invasion of Canaan, the initial stages of the conquest occurred around 1407 B.C.

However, archaeologists generally believe that the Israelites entered Canaan about 1230-1220 B.C., nearly 200 years later than the biblical date (Bimson, 1987, 13[5]:40-42). Again, excavations at Jericho, the first fortified city conquered by the Israelites (Joshua 2-6), are at the heart of this controversy. John Garstang was the first to employ modern pottery chronology to explore this biblical site. He uncovered a residential area in the southeast slope of the tell, which he called "City IV." This city had been destroyed by a violent conflagration. Based on pottery in the destruction debris, and other artifacts in the nearby cemetery, he associated City IV with the first city Israel defeated in the conquest. Garstang dated this destruction level to the late 15th or early 14th century B.C., and he believed that the invading Israelites caused the destruction, in harmony with the biblical record (Joshua 6:24; Wood, 1987, p. 7).

Kathleen Kenyon critiqued Garstang's work in 1951, and did additional excavation at this site during 1952-1958. Kenyon disagreed with Garstang's date of the destruction level, and placed it at c. 1550 B.C., many years before the biblical date of the conquest. She further contended that in 1400 B.C. there was no fortified city for Joshua's army to conquer, and that the archaeological evidence does not agree with the biblical description of a large-scale military incursion contemporary with the destruction of Jericho (Kenyon, 1957b, p. 259).

Kenyon based her conclusions largely upon the **absence** of pottery typically used around 1400 B.C.

Subsequently, scholars have critiqued Kenyon's work and have vindicated the conclusions of Garstang, and, by implication, the biblical chronology (Wood, 1990; Livingston, 1988; see also Jackson, 1990). Kenyon's conclusions, however, caused Jericho to become the classic example of the difficulties with correlating the biblical account of the conquest with the archaeological record. Pottery stands at the center of the interpretive and dating discrepancies of the conquest.

PROBLEMS WITH ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODS

How should we respond when archaeologists' interpretations are at variance with biblical facts? The following principles might be helpful as we struggle with the increasing antagonism toward the Scriptures from the field of archaeology.

Evolutionary Assumptions

As a rule, archaeologists endorse evolutionary assumptions that the Earth is ancient and that man developed gradually—both physically and intellectually—over millions of years. Kenyon attributed the development of the Jordan Valley to vast terrestrial movements two million years ago (Kenyon, 1957b, p. 23). Albright discussed in detail the "...artistic evolution of *Homo sapiens*," which first began around 30,000 to 20,000 B.C. (1942, pp. 6-10). Allegedly, as man slowly "evolved," he learned how to manufacture tools from stones, and gradually developed the ability to make pottery. With his discovery of fire, he learned to fashion tools from copper and iron. Thus, archaeologists assume that centuries transpired before man graduated from stone tools and weapons to metallic implements.

This, however, is an assumption that is plainly at odds with biblical revelation. Man was highly intelligent from the dawn of Creation, and possessed the ability to manufacture tools and musical instruments (indicative of artistic ability) from metals (Genesis 4:20-22). Further, the descendants of Noah retained the technical ability for making tools and weapons,

which would allow for rapid cultural recovery and restoration after the Flood (see Vaninger, 1985b, 22:67). The tower of Babel is an eloquent, and infamous, witness to the postdiluvians' technical abilities (Genesis 11).

In addition, the divinely prompted dispersion from Babel would account for the cultural disparity between ancient Egypt and Mesopotamian cultures. Researchers have found virtually no evidence of unsophisticated cultures in Egypt; advanced civilization in that region veritably explodes onto the historical scene. In contrast, Mesopotamia exhibits a clear cultural development from simple societies to more advanced civilization (Vaninger, 1985a, 22:38). This has puzzled archaeologists for many years. But, the ancient dispersion could account for these disparate cultural developments.

Evidence indicates that an aggressive transfusion of culture from the Near and Middle East into Egypt occurred in ancient history, which directly corresponds to biblical information (cf. Genesis 11:8-9; Albright, 1949, pp. 71-72). Those who migrated to Egypt obviously carried with them both culture and technology more advanced than those possessed by the people who remained in the Mesopotamian region. Accordingly, highly developed civilizations, and cultures which used stone implements, were contemporary; they were not separated by millennia. Even today, some cultures remain isolated from advanced technology, and continue to employ implements generally associated with the so-called Stone Age (see Livingston, 1992, 5[1]:7). Thus, evidence of settlements using stone tools does not demand an ancient Earth.

Paucity of Evidence

Second, we must recognize that archaeological evidence is fragmentary and, therefore, greatly limited. Despite the amount of potsherds, bones, ornaments, or tools collected from a given site, the evidence reflects only a paltry fraction of what existed in antiquity (Brandfon, 1988, 14[1]:54). Unearthed data often are insufficient, inconclusive, and subject to biased interpretation. The current debate about the time of the conquest is a case in point. Archaeological data alone are inadequate to determine the exact date, or cause, of Jericho's destruction. Therefore, we should listen with

cautious skepticism when archaeologists appeal to evidence that conflicts with the biblical text.

Presuppositions of Archaeologists

Third, the paucity of archaeological evidence provides fertile soil for imaginative—and often contradictory—conclusions. We must not overlook the matter of subjectivity in interpretations. Regarding this matter, Jesse Long Jr. correctly stated that “...presuppositions and assumptions determine interpretive stance and often color conclusions” (1992, 134[12]:12). He further added that “...the new archaeological consensus [regarding discoveries contradicting significant parts of the biblical version—GKB] may be more a reflection of philosophical assumptions than the concrete evidence of sherds and stones” (1992, 134[12]:12). **Inexact Science**

Finally, archaeology is an imprecise science, and should not serve as the judge of biblical historicity. The pottery dating scheme, for example, has proved to be most helpful in determining relative dates of strata in a tell. But, at best, pottery can place one only within the “chronological ball park.” John Laughlin, a seasoned archaeologist, recognized the importance of potsherds in dating strata, but offered two warnings: (1) a standard pottery type might have had many variants; and (2) similar ceramic types might not date to the same era—some types may have survived longer than others, and different manufacturing techniques and styles might have been introduced at different times in different locales. Further, he mentioned the fact of subjectivity in determining pottery typology: “...in addition to its observable traits, pottery has a ‘feel’ to it” (1990, 18[5]:72). Therefore, we must recognize archaeology for what it is—an inexact science with the innate capacity for mistakes.

CONCLUSION

There are many archaeological evidences, both artifactual and literary, which have undermined liberal interpretations of the biblical text, and supported its credibility. However, archaeology, like other natural sciences, has its limitations. William Dever, for example, observed that although archaeology as a historical discipline can answer many questions, it is incapable of determining “why” something occurred (1990, 16[3]:57). The destruction level at Jericho, for instance, which many date to the early 15th century B.C., corroborates the biblical text, but it cannot prove that a transcendent God caused its walls to fall. We must turn to sacred history for causative details. However, the physical evidence does support the historicity of the biblical narrative—certainly something we would expect of a divinely-inspired volume. Further, archaeology often serves to illuminate biblical texts. The literary discoveries at Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit), for example, have enhanced our knowledge of Baalism, shedding considerable light on biblical allusions to this pagan cult (see Brantley, 1993).

Indeed, archaeology is most helpful in biblical studies, often confirming and illuminating biblical texts. We must be aware, however, of its limitations, and deficiencies. The dating methods employed (e.g., radiocarbon, dendrochronology, pottery, and others) are imperfect, and are always based upon certain assumptions. Further, we should be aware of the current anti-biblical trend among many archaeologists. As with any scientific discipline, we need not sift God’s Word through the sieve of archaeological inquiry. Archaeological interpretations are in a constant state of flux and often wither as grass, but God’s Word abides forever.

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APPARENT AGE

Kyle Butt, M.A.

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How old is the Earth? No one knows the exact number of times this globe has orbited the Sun. However, using biblical chronology a person can calculate the age of the Earth to be in the neighborhood of 6,000 years old.

"But the Earth looks millions of years old," some people will protest. There are at least two responses to such a statement. First, one might ask: "Compared to what; what does a young Earth look like?" We do not have another Earth that we know is younger than this one, so how would we know what a young Earth looks like. Second, it should not surprise us if science occasionally calculates older dates for the Earth, due to a concept known as the "doctrine of apparent age."

This idea suggests that the things God made during the Creation week were formed complete and fully functional. For instance, how old were Adam and Eve two seconds after God created them? They were two seconds old! Yet they walked, talked, and looked like adult

human beings, and even had the ability to reproduce (which was one of the commands God gave them—Genesis 1:28). If a tree were cut down in the Garden of Eden one day after the Creation week, how many rings would it have had? Possibly hundreds, yet it would have been only five days old (trees and other plants, remember, were created on day three of the Creation week). So, the **real** age of the tree and the **apparent** age of the tree would have been quite different. Just because this Earth may **appear** older than 6,000 years, that does not mean it **is** older than that.

However, we must be careful not to "read into" the Bible things that are not there. For example, some people have asked if the doctrine of apparent age means that God placed plants and animals in the fossil record to "trick" man or "test his faith"? No, God never would do that. Why? When we find a fossil, we naturally (and correctly) believe that the organism that made the fossil once lived on Earth. If God just "inserted" it into the fossil record, then He has misled us or lied to us. Yet

the Bible plainly teaches us that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). How, then, did the vast numbers of plants and animals (and, occasionally, humans) become entombed in the fossil record? Likely, many (though not all) of the fossils we see are the result of the Flood of Noah.

Other people have suggested that if God made the Earth appear older than it actually is, then He has deceived us because things aren't really as old as they look. This criticism would be true—except for one thing: **God told us what He did!** He did not leave us in the dark or try to “trick us” or “test our faith” by hiding from us

important information that we would need. Rather, He was very straightforward and honest with us. Considering the material found in the first eleven chapters of Genesis (and elsewhere through the Bible), no one can justifiably accuse God of deception. If we ignore His Word regarding what He said He did, is it God's fault? Hardly!

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THE BIBLE SAYS THE EARTH IS YOUNG

Kyle Butt, M.A.

Reprint from Apologetics Press...

To the sincere and honest student, what the Bible says about the age of the Earth deserves serious consideration. For those who believe that there is a God, that Jesus is His Son, and that the Bible is His Word, this section offers an accurate answer to the question about the Earth's age.

It certainly would have solved many problems if God had put a verse in the Bible that said something to the effect of: “When Jesus was born, the Earth was exactly 4,134 years old.” Obviously, no such statement can be found in The Book, but that does not mean that the answer is not there. Many times, in order to find out what the Bible says about a particular subject, we must look at several different verses and piece them together like a puzzle. So, let's take one piece at a time.

In one sense, the Bible tells us exactly how old the Earth is. In Mark 10:6, Jesus stated: “From the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.” How long has humankind been on this Earth? Jesus said “**from the beginning of the creation.**” Genesis 1:26-31 explains that God chose the sixth day of the Creation week to form mankind from the dust of the ground. Were humans a part of that six-day beginning? Indeed they were. But what does it matter if mankind **was** formed on day

six? Exodus 20:11 records: “For in six days Jehovah made heaven and **earth**, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day....” Quite simply, that piece of information, combined with the information from Genesis 1 and Mark 10:6, informs us the Earth is exactly five days older than humanity!

In order to determine the age of the Earth, then, we must determine how long man has been here—which is not as difficult as it may seem. Speaking in round figures, it has been about 2,000 years since Jesus Christ visited the Earth. Secular history volunteers that piece of information, since it is A.D. 2002 (A.D. standing for *anno Domini*, meaning “in the year of the Lord”). Next, we must determine how many years came between Jesus Christ and Abraham. Secular history also volunteers this figure, which turns out to be about 2,000. These two figures can be obtained from practically any secular history book.

The final number we must uncover is the number of years between Abraham and Adam. We know from Genesis 1:1-5 that the Earth was created on day one. We know from Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:45 that Adam was “the first man.” And we know from Genesis 1 that Adam was created on day six of the Creation week. If we could determine the

number of years between Adam and Abraham, that would place us within five days of “the beginning.” All that would be necessary to calculate an approximate age for the Earth would be to add the three figures together—the time from Adam to Abraham, the time from Abraham to Jesus, and the time from Jesus to us. The figure representing the time between Abraham and Adam cannot be retrieved from secular history, of course (nor should we expect it to be), since the Noahic Flood would have destroyed most, if not all, of the records pertaining to that time period. How, then, can we determine the number of years in that time span?

In chapter 3 of the book that bears his name, Luke lists 55 generations between Jesus and Abraham—a time that archaeology has determined to be about 2,000 years (see Kitchen and Douglas, 1982). In that same chapter, Luke documents that there were only 20 generations between Abraham and Adam. How much time is covered by those twenty generations? Since Genesis 5 provides the ages of the fathers at the time of the births of the sons in the period between Abraham and Adam, it is a simple matter to calculate the approximate number of years during that time span—a figure that turns out to be about 2,000. In chart form it looks like this:

Present to Jesus	2,000 years
Jesus to Abraham	2,000 years (55 generations)
Abraham to Adam	2,000 years (20 generations)

[The fact that the 55 generations between Jesus and Abraham cover 2,000 years, while only 20 generations between Abraham and Adam cover the same amount of time, is explained quite easily on the basis of the vast ages of the patriarchs (e.g., Methuselah, who lived 969 years—Genesis 5:27).]

possible gaps between them. In order to accommodate the evolutionary scenario that man has been on the Earth (in some form) approximately 3.5 million years, one would need to insert approximately 290,000 years between each of the 13 generations. It does not take a wealth of Bible knowledge or common sense to see that this quickly becomes ludicrous. Who could believe that the first seven of these generations are so exact, while the remaining 13 contain “gaps” of over 290,000 years each? What kind of biblical exegesis would that represent?

Some have argued that the genealogies in Genesis 5 cannot be used to show the age of the Earth because they contain huge gaps. But in Jude verse 14, the writer noted that “Enoch was the seventh from Adam” (he is listed, in fact, exactly seventh in the genealogies in Genesis 5:21). Therefore, we know that there are no gaps between the first seven patriarchs, because Jude, writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, confirmed the Old Testament account. That leaves only 13 generations with

The Bible plainly teaches, after all the pieces have been put together, that the Earth is only about 6,000 or so years old. It is a young Earth after all!

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HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR BIBLE? (9)

Jerry D. McDonald

In our last issue we looked at Mr. Barker's question of where God dwells, and Mr. Barker's answer of God dwelling in darkness. Now we want to on and respond to another one of Mr. Barker's questions in his Bible quiz: "According to biblical biology, what is a bat?" The choices that Mr. Barker gives you are: (A) A Bird, (B) A Mammal, (C) An Insect, (D) A mythical creature. Mr. Barker's choice answer is:

"A...Biblical biology rates an 'F.' Bats are mammals, not birds. This is another good reason to keep bibles out of science classes. "And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray, And the vulture . . . And the stork, the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat." (Leviticus 11:13-19, where "fowl" is oph. Repeated in Deuteronomy 14:11-20, calling the same list "birds" [tsippor] and "fowls" [oph])

(<http://www.ffrf.org/quiz/banswers.php>).

The word for "fowl" here not only has reference to birds, but to any winged creature as the *Word Study Dictionary* points out:

"*ôp*: A collective masculine noun meaning a bird, a **flying creature**. It refers to winged birds or **insects**: birds ([Gen 1:20](#), [Gen 1:22](#)) of all kinds, including carrion birds, birds that serve as scavengers ([1Sa 17:44](#), [1Sa 17:46](#)); for food ([Psa 78:27](#)); for offerings ([Gen 8:20](#); [Lev 1:14](#)). It is also used of insects, clean or unclean ([Lev 11:20](#), 21: [Deu 14:19](#))" (*e-Sword*).

This idea that the Bible is scientifically erroneous here is fallacious. The word that the Hebrews used for fowl included anything that flew, whether it was a bird, a bat or an insect. It was still a fowl.

It is rather presumptuous of one to judge the Bible by our modern day scientific classifications when those classifications could change from one generation to the next. If, in 200 years, archaeologists should find books that have certain scientific classifications in them, and they have different classifications for those things, would that make us ignorant

and in error? Would that mean that we were primitive and didn't know what we were doing? No, all it would mean is that the future generation simply gave that thing a different scientific classification.

The Bible is not in error simply because it classified the bat as a fowl and we do not. There are a lot of things that we classify differently than what the Hebrews did. The Hebrews had different measuring systems than we do. The Bible talks about Solomon's Sea that held 2000 baths and when filled to the rim would hold 3000. Dennis McKinsey criticized the Bible, once, in his publication *Biblical Errancy* because he thought that it was saying that it contained 2000 bathtubs and would hold 3000 bathtubs. However, even one of his own atheist subscribers told him that a Hebrew bath was a measurement of liquid. We do not have this measurement today, but that does not make the Hebrews in error.

The Hebrews used the measurement of cubits (which was about a foot and a half) while we use feet and inches. Does that mean that the Bible was in error? No! We have to recognize that the Bible was written directly to the people of the day in which it was written, and it was written using their language; their measurements, their scientific classifications, etc. This does not mean that nothing in the Bible directly applies to us today because there are things that do, but we need to remember that many things (such as these measurements, and scientific classifications) were applicable to the people of that day, and not to us.

Mr. Barker ought to know this with all the time he supposedly spent studying the Bible. I find it inconceivable that a man could study the scriptures as thoroughly as Mr. Barker claims that he has, and not understand such basic concepts as these. Here is what I think, I think Dan understands these things, but he has to have some reason to find fault with the Bible, and one excuse is as good as another.

What this amounts to is that Dan needs to find fault with the Bible because he has an agenda and that is to rid society of any semblance of God. He, and his friend Richard Dawkins have an agenda to take people's faith away from the Bible and keep them from believing in God.

They don't want anyone to have faith. He says that there are atheists that are happy to see people attend church services, but he

apparently isn't one of them. His little quiz on the FFRF website is indicative of that.

NEWS

There isn't much going on these days. I have a written debate going on with Todd Greene on the age of the universe/earth. I have already sent in my first affirmative at <http://www.challenge2.org/mcd1aff1prop.pdf> and am waiting for his first rebuttal. You can now purchase your copy of the Butt/Barker Debate from either Apologetics Press or The World Video Bible School. I ordered two copies when it first came out, and I just got

mine this past week. So it may take you a while to get yours. Several have asked about how to find out about my debates and you can find most of them by going to <http://www.challenge2.org> and then going to debates and clicking on it, and also "exchanges," and some exchanges in the "article" section. There are also a couple of debates on my Biblical Criticism website at <http://www.biblical-criticism.com> and go to debates and articles.

Challenge is a quarterly apologetic journal that is used mainly to debate the evangelical atheistic/skeptical movement that permeates our country today. There is no charge for the electronic journal and you can either view it on the challenge website or request it and it will be sent to you free of charge. If you want the paper version of Challenge please let me know. We won't be making that many, but we will make them up for those who don't use computers. There will be no charge for the paper version. For the electronic version please send an email to jerry@challenge2.org. If you want the paper version you can send a request to that address or the following regular address: Challenge, P.O. 237, Belle, MO 65013. Phone is (573) 578-5931) Jerry McDonald is the editor and owner of Challenge. Thomas Hardeman McDonald is the co-editor.

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