

THE ANTIQUITY OF HUMAN HISTORY

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How long has man been upon the Earth? Does the Bible give any indication? Is there conflict between the assertions of “science” and the biblical record? These are questions that challenge the attention of many today.

Informed people certainly are aware of the fact that numerous scientists theorize that humanity has a strictly naturalistic origin. More than a billion years ago, it is alleged, life was generated spontaneously in some primeval slime. That initial life force supposedly evolved into man. Since such a gradual and natural process would necessitate vast periods of time, the evolutionists have erected a chronological scheme which suggests that the Earth is approximately 4.6 billion years old. The contention is made that man, compared to Earth history, is a Johnny-come-lately.

In 1957 when George G. Simpson (one of the previous generation’s most prominent evolutionary scholars) and his colleagues penned their popular book, *Life: An Introduction to Biology*, they asserted that all of man’s fossil ancestors could be confined to the Pleistocene era (of the evolutionary geological time table) and that “none of them is at all likely to be more than a million years old, and most of them must be under 500,000” (pp. 796-797). That estimation was not to survive long. In 1973, Richard Leakey, an anthropologist working in Africa, discovered bones of a creature that he classified as “modern man.” Amazingly, he dated them at more than 2.5 million years old! In the early months of 1978, Dr. Mary Leakey (Richard’s mother), working with the National Geographic Society in Tanzania, announced that hominid fossilized footprints and jawbones have been unearthed that likely thrust man’s history back at least 3.6 million years!

How does all of this relate to the biblical picture of the history of humankind? Does the Bible extend human history into the millions of years? Or has man been on Earth but a few thousand years? Or is Scripture silent on this matter? Those who approach the Bible from a strictly conservative viewpoint, trusting in the integrity of Scripture’s historicity, know that man’s antiquity can be measured in only terms of several thousand years. This is revealed by the fact that the genealogy of Christ, Who lived less than 2,000 years ago, is traced all the way to Adam in Luke 3. While it is conceded that occasionally small gaps occur in genealogical lineages, they must of necessity be **relatively minor** or such genealogical records become functionally worthless!

That brings us to this important point. It is a sad fact that some religionists (professed friends of the Bible) are almost totally intimidated by the wild assertions of the scientific community. Hence, they are constantly adjusting their “interpretation” of the Bible to square with the latest notions of academic pronouncement. For instance, when it was announced several years back that man was 1 million years old, some teachers of the Bible concluded that they must either: (a) repudiate Paul’s statement that Adam was the first man (1 Cor. 15:45); or (b) accommodate the genealogy of Christ with huge gaps to fit the million-year theory; they chose the latter, never dreaming to question the assumptions of the evolutionists. Now these religionists are forced, if they continue to do obeisance to the god of science, to stretch the genealogy of the Lord to a span of more than threeand-one-half million years! Let us briefly consider their problem.

It can be demonstrated archaeologically that the genealogy of Jesus from Mary back to Abraham spans, at the most, about 2,000 years (see K.A. Kitchen and T.C. Mitchell, *The New Bible Dictionary*, J.D. Douglas, ed., 1974, p. 213). Hence, from the present to the era of Abraham, less than 4,000 years are involved. From Abraham backward to Adam, Luke’s record lists only twenty persons in the lineage of Christ (and this includes Cainan, who is not mentioned in the Hebrew catalogs of the O.T.). So, if we are to placate science, 3.5 million years must be squeezed into these twenty generations. It appears, however, that there are no gaps within the first seven generations, for the inspired Jude declares that Enoch is the seventh from Adam (Jude 14); thus, we are left with only thirteen generations to manipulate!

Let us assume (for the sake of simple mathematics) that each of those generations was 500 years, which would consume only 6,500 years of history. Accordingly, of the initial 3.5 million years, we still have 3,493,500 years to serve as gaps between the thirteen names. This is an average of 291,125 years. Each gap, therefore, would be about 582 times the length of each generation mentioned. To see the force of this, imagine a sheet of paper nearly the length of two football fields. Beginning at one end, draw a horizontal line one inch long and followed by a gap of forty-eight and one-half feet, then another one-inch line, another forty-eight and one-half feet gap, and so on. If that is a sensible approach to Bible interpretation, this writer doesn’t know the abc’s of exegesis! It would further appear that the “genealogies” ought henceforth to be called “gap-e-alogies.” Too, since this seems to be the era of a multiplicity of Bible versions, perhaps someone could come out with a rubberized version of the Scriptures that would contain sufficient elasticity to allow further “scientific” discoveries.

Seriously, God’s people need to learn that it is the epitome of folly to be seduced by the silly assertions of infidel pseudo-scholars. The Bible is factual in its clear statements, and its implied deductions, regarding the history of man. Let us trust it and study it thoroughly.

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