

APOLOGETICS 7 – THE AGE OF THE EARTH, PART 1

INTRODUCTION

Apologetics - ἀπολογία apologia

The definition of Christian Apologetics is “the information that enables a believer to provide a defense for why a doctrine is believed.”

1 Peter 3:15 – But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

2 Corinthians 10:5 – We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

GOAL

1. To strengthen the students so that they reach a confident, steadfast belief in God, Jesus, and the Scriptures so that they will never fall.
2. To prepare the student to give a proper response to common challenges.
 - a. The student may or may not actually give an answer.
 - b. The preparation is intended so that any challenge will not cause the student to doubt the truth of God, Jesus Christ.

BIBLICAL AGE OF THE EARTH

How old is our world, both Earth and the universe? Does the Bible give us an indication as to when God created the world and everything that is in it?

Some believers say not, and they avoid the question of the age of the earth. Of course, the Bible does not explicitly say anywhere, “The earth is 6,000 years old.” Nowhere in Scripture does it indicate its age in years. All references to the time of an event are typically in relation to a known person, ruler, or event (Genesis 7:11; 1 Kings 6:1; Luke 3:1).

The Bible does provide a chronology in Genesis 5 and Genesis 11. In both lineage passages, we have the same formula: Patriarch – age when a significant son was born – time lived after the age of the significant son was born – total years lived.

Putting both of these passages together takes us from Adam to Abraham. The amount of time that we conclude depends on some textual criticism. Most Bibles are translated into English from the Masoretic Texts. But some people prefer the texts from the Septuagint (LXX) or the Samaritan Pentateuch.

The reason that some prefer the LXX is because of the obvious error of missing a person in the line, Cainan (Son of Arphaxad and Salah). There may have been a copyist error in the MT, which is substantiated in the genealogy in Luke 3. But the addition of Cainan in Luke is also a textual criticism. For our purposes, we will look at the MT and LXX date ranges.

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MT – 1948 years from Adam to the birth of Abraham

LXX – 3314 years from Adam to the birth of Abraham

It is typically agreed that Abraham was born around 2000 BC (1996 BC).

The most conservative age of the earth is about 6,030 years.

If one were to use the LXX dates, the age of the earth is about 7,400 years.

There are some who believe that there are gaps in the genealogies. They have nothing on which to base this. They are trying to placate others who say human history is older than the biblical record. The most popular theory among those promoting gaps in the record is that Adam was created 9,000 to 20,000 years ago.

We will discuss the Day-Age Theory and Theistic Evolution at a later date.

DETERMINING AGE

In this world, we have a difficult time determining the age of any nonliving object. Does the earth look old? Old is relative. Old in comparison to what? How do atheistic naturalists determine the age of the earth?

There are four major methods that atheistic naturalists use for determining the age of our earth or the universe.

1. Radiometric Dating
2. Annual Rings/Layers
3. Distant Starlight
4. Geological Column

1. Radiometric Dating

One of the most commonly used arguments for an old earth involves the technique of radiometric dating. We are told that rocks have been dated to be billions of years old. Radiometric dating is supposed to tell how much time has elapsed since a rock was formed (from magma).

However, we know that radiometric dating is unreliable because it can be tested on rocks of known age. Scientists have taken rocks of which we know their age because they were formed from recent volcanic eruptions (the age of a rock is supposed to go back to the point of solidification). These rocks were then measured using standard radiometric dating criteria.

The results came with much older dates than their true known age. The most popular method is Potassium-Argon Dating.

Rocks that were from a formation from a volcanic eruption in 1972 (Mt Elba) were dated with P-A and were given the range of 210,000-490,000 years old.

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Mount St. Helens erupted in 1980 with new rocks solidifying. Those rocks were dated using the P-A criteria and were concluded to be 300,000 to 400,000 years old.

Radiometric dating has been shown to not work on rocks of known age. Yet most secular scientists assume that radiometric dating works on rocks of unknown age.

There are more controversies with radiometric dating. For a good resource, I would suggest “Thousands... Not Billions” by Dr. Don DeYoung

2. Annual Rings/Layers

Here is the typical thought:

“Tree rings, coral reefs, ice deposits in Antarctica and Greenland, and sedimentary layers in lakes and seas are like calendars in that they record the passing of years. Each year, another ring or layer is added. By counting the rings or layers, an investigator can determine for how many years the tree, reef, ice deposit, or sediment has been in existence.”

This is based on presumptions that have been proven false. Scientists have observed that trees can form more than one ring per year, especially in years in which mild weather produces longer growing seasons.

Ice layers also do not demonstrate years.

In July 1942, two B-17 bombers and six P-38 fighter planes were forced to make emergency landings in southeast Greenland. The pilots were rescued, but the planes were abandoned and eventually buried beneath years of accumulating snow and ice.

The first P-38 was recovered from the ice back in August 1992. This plane, later called “Glacier Girl,” was recovered from more than 260 feet of ice that had accumulated in just fifty years.

That this much ice had accumulated in just fifty years demonstrates that ice sheets can accumulate very quickly. Some 10,000 feet of glacial ice in Greenland can easily be formed in less than 5,000 years.

3. Distant Starlight

There are questions as to how far, but most would agree that stars and galaxies are billions of light-years away. So, it would stand to reason that light from a star that was formed at its current location would take billions of years to reach our eyes today.

But there are many faulty assumptions with this idea as well. There is much research and theories that abound, but both creation researchers and secular astrophysicists are demonstrating that light can travel much faster than previously thought. If this is something that you would like to read up on, I would suggest “Starlight and Time: Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe” by D.R. Humphreys.

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4. The Geological Column

It has been claimed that the geological column demonstrates a progression of animal evolution that is consistent throughout the earth. However, the global 'stack' of index fossils exists nowhere on Earth, and most index fossils do not exist with each other at the same locality. So, even in those places where all the so-called eras have been assigned, the column is hypothetical.

Index fossils were in the development of the geologic column. It was assumed that certain extinct species were older and so they dated the rock layer by the fossils that are in them. Geologists date a rock layer based on the fossils they find. And they know how old the fossil is based on which layer it is found in.

One of the major ways we know that the geological column is a fraud is because we find human artifacts in various layers and in coal seams. Also, we can observe polystrate fossils of trees in multiple layers of the geologic column.

CONCLUSION

The biblical data demonstrates that all creation is young when compared to the atheistic evolutionary model. The Bible clearly states that we are between 6-7,000 years old. Even with some textual theories, at the oldest, we are about 10,000. I reject dates older than that because they are not based on biblical data.

The atheistic evolutionary model claims multiple billions of years. Their methods of dating do not confirm this and are often circular in their reasoning.

But this does not confirm the biblical account. For that, we would need to provide evidence that mankind, the earth, and the cosmos are, in fact, young. Can that be done? Next lesson, we will look at some of this evidence.