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**B0806 – February 17, 2008 –Interpreting Genesis 1-11**

We're going to look at the first of 4 appendices. The appendix really is to deal with the question of interpreting Gen 1-11. This isn't a question for non-Christians; we'll engage them in the other three appendices where we deal with biology, physics and geology. But the issue of interpreting Genesis is largely one that occurs inside the Church. We said that Gen 1-11 is the foundation for the rest of biblical revelation because it tells the origin story. And anytime you bring up origins people get all hot and bothered and you wonder, "Why's this?" And we said it's because you're getting at the very root of a person's belief about God, man and the universe. Origins, because it's the ultimate context, controls a person's speech, a person's views of reality, a person's view of stability and language, everything such that we came up with the pithy saying that "You can't say anything about anything without by implication saying something about everything." Yet we found, in the last 200 years, a movement in the Church to forsake the traditional interpretation of Genesis, even to the point of arguing that there never was a traditional interpretation of Genesis. Interestingly, and kind of paradoxically, most of this occurs in Christian schools. One of the odd things to notice about the modern creationist-evolutionist controversy is that the loudest proponents of creationism are Christians who have technical backgrounds, who have nothing to do with the Christian campus. The people who are the most compromising and accommodating are generally people on Christian campuses. This isn't always true, but that tends to be the case, that Christian schools try to be gentlemanly to the point of being so accommodating, fearing they will drive the non-Christian away from the gospel, that they want to kind of speak out of both sides of their mouth. That is just an observation. Most Christian campuses do this; many Christians have gone to colleges and wound up with an accommodating interpretation of Scripture. Someone was telling me just a few weeks ago that they didn't learn evolution at the University of Texas, they learned it at Baylor. And what I've observed is that a student on a Christian campus tends to have his guard down just because he's got Christian professors so they tend to let it in their imagination without critical evaluation. And you may find it odd but on the secular campus, where I think the conflict is much

clearer, where you have clearly a Christian, non-Christian conflict, there you tend to get forced into one position or the other. This has just been my observation.

This appendix deals with one of the three strategies. We said there are three strategies that have been used to try and reconcile the Bible, science and the origin story. One of those strategies is the *Capitulation Strategy*, and in the capitulation strategy the Bible is totally abandoned, officially, completely, and explicitly, very clear. Representatives of that strategy would be your liberal church men, the modernists who in the 20<sup>th</sup> century basically have taken over every major denomination, one of the things that we Christians need to learn is our own history, it would really help most of us if we would know what has happened in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The way we've been taught, most of us have gone to secular schools and have had a secular history course, the two big events in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are WWI and WWII, and maybe the depression. But that's not true, one of the biggest events in this country happened, and it's never mentioned in a history course in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and that is, between 1900 and 1925 every major denomination went liberal. Every single one of them, schools were lost, libraries were lost, denominations were lost. One of the most famous sermons in America was preached in 1922 at New York's First Presbyterian Church, a sermon so famous that it was the headline of every major American paper, the pastor was a man named Harry Emerson Fosdick. If you rummage through your parent's libraries, people who lived in the 20's and you dig around their books, see what kind of things they were reading, you may find a book written by Harry Emerson Fosdick, a very prolific writer. One of his famous books was *The Manhood of the Master*, clearly affirming the humanity of Jesus to the point of denial of His deity. He popularized liberalism. On that Sunday morning the title of his sermon was "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?"<sup>1</sup> And it was the beginning of the great put-down in America of fundamentalism. And the reason Harry Emerson Fosdick preached that sermon that Sunday morning was because the fundamentalists in some of the denominations were questioning supporting pastors and missionaries who were denying overtly and clearly the virgin birth of Jesus, the inspiration of the Bible, the second coming, etc. And Fosdick resented, and the liberal always has resented those who hold a church organization to a creedal standard, especially when it comes to money, because the most sensitive portion of the human anatomy is the wallet. And this always works; so it was in the early 20's, the prosperity was all over the country so you had this building economy, you know, the roaring 20's. But what people forget is that the 20's were really roaring in the area of theology and only in our day, in the 80's and 90's has the evangelical world realized a little bit of the maturity it had at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We have gone through a dearth, from the 20's, the 30's, the 40's and there were a few men in those days who fought to hold the line, men like J Gresham Machen in New

Jersey, Donald Grey Barnhouse in Philadelphia, Harold John Ockenga in New England, these were some of the men that held the line and fought the battle until enough younger men could come in behind them and man the fort. So it's a very fascinating history of our country and you never hear it, unless you happen to take a course in American Church History. But that pertains to this appendix because during the 20's and 30's, accommodation interpretations became the mainstream. What we have presented in this course so far, the strict interpretation of Genesis, is a new thing, in the sense that it was resurrected in the 60's, and it was not held by many of the evangelicals all the way back. In fact, even in the Scopes Monkey Trial in Tennessee, Williams Jennings Bryan did not hold to a totally literal interpretation of Genesis, a fascinating side note of history. One of the reasons he lost to Clarence Darrow, it is felt, is that he was fundamentally inconsistent. Bryan was trying to oppose evolution but he also compromised himself in the area of not having a holistic view of Gen 1-11. He was trying to insert ages and all kinds of things in there. He wasn't consistent, and Clarence Darrow was a very consistent and logical attorney and he just chopped Bryan to pieces, and made him look like an idiot along with everyone else that was a creationist at the time.

So it's important that we look at why, since the early 1960's, has there been a resurgence of strict creationism in our camp and why it's still a controversy inside our Christian camp, and that's why I warn you that you can't assume that just because someone trusted the Lord Jesus Christ that they're going to agree with you in the area of Gen 1-11, it's not going to happen, because the church, for over 100 years, has either done what the modernist does, try an Accomodationist Strategy, try to squeeze time into the text, and they would try to smear out any differences between what the text appeared to say and what evolution was saying, trying to reduce tensions, that's all. And many of them with good intentions.

But by the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century it became clear that the accomodationist strategy was unraveling because at every point that a compromise was made, it resulted in another compromise. And men who were in their 50's back in 1960 were the guys that really began to articulate it, they began to get very, very concerned about the way things were going, and they said "No, no, there's something wrong in our whole approach." It was during those years that they re-thought things, and out of that came what we now know as strict creationism. I call that the *Counterattack Strategy*, and I deliberately call it a counterattack strategy to draw attention to the fact that these people are countering, the image here is often that, "What is wrong with these people, surely they've gone to science schools, they've gotten their degrees in math and science engineering, what is wrong with them, why do they insist on this strict stuff when they know darn well it

creates such tension, and they're taking on the whole world by doing this, why do they insist on doing this, don't they realize that there are other people in the church who took an allegorical interpretation?" That kind of stuff. Why I've said that this is a counterattack strategy is because these people are very informed. It is precisely because they do know the Genesis text; it is precisely because they are trained in the sciences, that they returned to a strict creationism.

The problem was, and most of these men who did this, as I said, were not people who lived on Christian campuses. They were men who worked out in the everyday world of science and engineering, who had to deal with this. So yes, I am fully aware of the arguments from the other side and that what I have taught in these classes is in massive collision with the world system. But I'm deliberately doing it that way because that's the way it is. So half of the tension, obviously, is "Are we right in saying Genesis should be literally interpreted?" And that's the question we are dealing with today.

## **LANGUAGE AND HERMENEUTICS**

The first point has to deal with hermeneutics. Hermeneutics deals with the rules of interpreting literature, which causes us to get back to the issue of language. To do that go back to Gen 1 and hold your place there and turn to John 1 and we'll flip-flop between the two, because we want to observe something because the heart of the problem of interpreting literature is one's view of language. It's quite obvious, if you look at Gen 1 that the verb of creating is a verb of speaking, notice v 3. The first thing that is recorded to have been created after the earth is light, and the light is a result of God speaking, "God said, Let there be light," and if you have a modern translation it's in quotes, "Let there be light," a sentence, with nouns and verbs in it that have meaning, was spoken. Then in v 5, after the act of creative speaking in v 3 light appeared. There's not some intermittent act where God said, "Gee I want to make light, and then He set out to compress atoms or something," and then He said, "Oh, now I have light." The only verb we see in the text is speaking, a verb to speak. So what immediately comes out of this is that all of reality; energy, mass, atomic structures, whatever you want to talk about, is a result of language. But it's not the language of the creature; it's the language of the Creator. So, in Scripture, language operates on two levels. The Creator's language is above all and we fundamentalists like to use the term God's word, God's word, God's word, but I'm not using "God's word," I'm using "God's language" simply as a device to make us think a little bit clearer. Because if I keep using "God's Word" we all think we know what "God's Word" means, therefore we don't listen, therefore we don't catch it, so I won't use "God's Word" so much, I'll use "God's language." So God speaks, and

there's a linguistic structure to all of nature. The idea is that His language is superior to and shapes everything else. Why do I make a point about that? Because those who would argue we can't interpret Genesis literally argue like this: they say "All language is partially descriptive, it's only approximate, it's limited, so limited that it accommodates itself to something that's not really quite ready for language." Now, that's true of creature language, but everything that exists has come into being through a meta-language, the Creator speaking which is God's Word. So that means that we, if we start right here in the Scripture, the third verse of the Bible gives us a Doctrine of Language, and that is a doctrine that collides, absolutely, emphatically and completely with the view of language as articulated by 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers, and everyone else that's pawning off postmodern deconstruction on our society.

Alan Keyes was speaking at Heritage and he went on and on about the Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence and how anytime our federal judicial system comes in to decide a state issue it itself is violating the Constitution and Declaration. They have no right but they've got these slick interpretations of the two documents to justify their involvement. Why? Because they've shifted the hermeneutic. Yes, the founding fathers may have meant X but they were biased and we have the right, because language is just a tool, a tool of deception, so we can come in and tear it down and legislate new laws out of thin air. So the secularist climbs all over it and tears it down. What they do, as they keep yakking like this week after week, what you finally wind up with is "Gee, is language capable of communicating anything, and you come out with a very low, low, low view of language." Well, see, if you diminish your view of language, what else happens? You can't think without language, so if you can destroy language, you've destroyed thinking, and if you've destroyed thinking the next step is that you're left with emotions. So this is why everybody wants to emote and make these mindless statements and responses, just an emotional response to something, no thought given, because if you can't have language, and language isn't a very good tool then I can't think because I don't have any tools to think with. So the battle of our own time has largely to do with this thing, and if you have a low view of language you're going to interpret Genesis in a very figurative way, in a very slippery way, it's going to come across to you that it's all metaphor, it's just men, the ancient Jewish people trying to express themselves and their ideas. But you see, here's where you get in trouble. If you're going to be a Christian, you have to be a fundamentalist and get to the truth, because if you don't go far enough in your faith to see that God literally speaks in verse 3, that God literally speaks that sentence, then you have no support for your whole theory of language. Our whole idea of Genesis is that it's to be interpreted literally because language is a bona fide tool with which we understand the world. If you write me a letter,

do you intend me to have trouble interpreting it? It may come across that way, but you certainly don't intend that. You intend to communicate an idea to me when you write a letter. Why can't we assume the same thing about God as the meta-communicator? C'mon, He's an infinitely better communicator than I am. So when God wants to speak to us, does He really intend that we have this tremendous problem understanding what it is He's trying to say? It thwarts the whole idea of language. So from a Biblical viewpoint there shouldn't be an interpretation problem to start with in Genesis. This is history. The only reason people have problems with it is that it doesn't line up very well with the modern evolutionary story. Remember I showed this slide,

CREATION	vs	EVOLUTION
1. In the beginning God		1. In the beginning gas
2. Cool liquid water		2. Hot condensing matter
3. Sun & stars after plants		3. Sun & stars before plants
4. Life created on earth		4. Life evolves in sea
5. Birds created before fish		5. Birds evolve after fish
6. Man created from dust and woman from man		6. Man evolves from mammals
7. Rain occurs after man		7. Rain occurs millions of years before man
8. Creation processes turned off on day 6		8. Evolutionary processes continue today
9. Differences in kind		9. Differences in degree
10. Death is abnormal		10. Death is normal

which clearly shows we have a problem; on the left side the Genesis text is giving us a narration of events that conflict in very, very fundamental ways with the right side, which is what we're taught in evolution in the school system. It doesn't require a genius to see we've got a big problem here; we've got major conflicts going on from one end of that list to the other. So what do you do about that? That's where the rubber Bible game comes in, and that's how Accommodationism started, can't we get rid of some of this, this is an embarrassment, here we are, modern people going around with this ancient document that conflicts so much with what the world says. We want to get to the gospel, so in order to get to the gospel we'll try to get rid of this embarrassment. The problem is, if you mess with this you never can get to the gospel, because now the Christ that you're talking about isn't the Christ of Scripture, it's another Christ. It becomes a content-less slogan unless we're talking about the Christ of Scripture, that's the only Christ there is, there's no other Christ. There's human attempts to reconstruct Jesus, and there's the liberal Jesus and the new age Jesus, and the ecumenical Jesus, there's lot of Jesus'. But the real Jesus is defined only in Scripture, so we have to go through this so-called embarrassment, this Genesis text that conflicts completely with our world. It's part of the load we carry as Christians, but we shouldn't look upon it as a load, or as an embarrassment, it's defining answers for which the world has none. That's what we've

tried to say as we've gone through Creation, the Fall, the Flood and the Covenant. We said point after point after point after point, whether it's in psychology, in the area of language, the area of knowing, the area of morals, whether it's in the area dealing with evil, it's not that there are other answers out there, they don't have any answers. Do you know what the word in the Greek and Hebrew for unbelief is? It's translated by this anemic little word in our English called "vanity," but what it really means is just hot air. Unbelief is just a lot of hot air, and we have to show people, hot air, that's all it is, it doesn't have a basis. But it's hard to do that. It's not that you can just call it hot air; you've got to show that it's hot air, and that's what we've tried to do as we've gone through here.

So hermeneutics and presuppositions, what do we mean by this? We mean that how you interpret literature is controlled by your Doctrine of Language, and in turn your doctrine of language derives from your presuppositions about whether or not God's word is God's word. That's your starting point. If you start off denying that you're going to come out with one view of language; if you start affirming that, you're going to come out with another view of language. That's because everything hinges on the fact that in Scripture we go back to this two-level idea, we have the Creator and the creature; we have Language with a capital "L" up here and we have language down here with a little "l." This Language isn't the same as this language. There's a correspondence but His language is the language of omniscience. His language is perfectly and logically consistent in every detail, it is a language that commands a total and perfect knowledge, whereas we are finite creatures and we have pieces, and we understand a little bit here and a little bit there, and it looks conflicting and foggy to us.

Now, in John 1, after we've thought a little bit about Gen 1, think what John has done for us in his Gospel. What John has done under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is he has digested and extended the meaning of Gen 1. In Gen 1 God speaks and He says "Let there be light" and there was light. God says "Let there be" this, and there was that. What John does now is interesting. He says, "In the beginning," now there's a phrase, a direct copy from Gen 1:1, let's line those two statements up. Gen 1:1 says "In the beginning God created," and we know that He created by means of language, God said and it was, God said and it was, etc. Now John comes along in the New Testament and he says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." What do you think impressed the apostle John about the Genesis text? Precisely what's bothering 20<sup>th</sup> century people. The whole issue of language. Look at the word that he uses for the Second Person of the Trinity. Logos! This is the word that means thought, it's the word that means speech. It means the thought and the words of the thought that express it. So what John is amazed at

is that “In the beginning was language, and language was with God, and language was God.” That’s his high view of language. Think of the implications this has for training people to read. Do you know why literacy was promoted in Western civilization? To read the Bible, to converse with God and understand what He said. Think of this. Who defined the modern German language? Luther. How did he do that? By translating the Bible. Luther set up modern German. Who was it that basically structured the English language? Tyndale, 83% of the King James Version was derived from Tyndale’s work. Why were there great demands in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to teach children to read? So they could read the Bible. Why did people learn to read? Basic question. There were only about 3 or 4 books in the average American home; one was Blackstone’s commentaries on the law, which amazingly was a best seller in New England, colonial America, the Bible and the Almanac. That was basically most people’s library, the people who could afford it had classic books of course, but that was it, and people learned to read because they wanted to learn what was on God’s mind. That’s the high view, the great motivation behind literacy. Drop the Bible’s high view of language and what happens to literacy?

Now as we come to our day, when systematically we have by law excluded biblical claims from the classroom, and we’ve got a problem with literacy. Oh kids can read in the sense that they understand the letters, but they can’t put them together into coherent thought. Why is that? No motivation. Why should I bother to learn how to read and go through all the disciplines of learning language and expressing myself in language when there’s nothing really there that you’ve shown me that’s worth talking about? I can understand football without reading. I can have a good time; I don’t have to learn to read to have a good time. I don’t have to read to do a lot of manual labor. So what’s the motivation? We can’t talk about that, it’s a violation of the separation of church and state. So by snapping the umbilical cord beneath the biblical view of language, we’ve destroyed the motive to learn language. It’s very simple logic. So we want to understand when we come to Gen. 1-11 it’s built on this very high level, and John, when John writes of this he is so excited about the fact that there’s thought, there’s reason, somebody is talking out there, that he calls the second personality of the Trinity “the Word.” He has a message that can be read.

## **THE TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION OF GEN 1-11**

Now let’s go on to the traditional interpretation. We’ve mentioned that if you want to learn about the Old Testament, often you can get interpretations by seeing how the New Testament authors interpret the Old Testament. So, I want to take you to Matt 19:4-5 because it is a classic instance of Jesus apparently not knowing what every college



freshman knows who has taken a course in Biblical criticism. Jesus, to the modern man, makes a terrible mistake here. In vv 4-6 He's dealing with a very practical question, notice, very practical, divorce. "And He answered and said, Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female," if you have a marginal reference, somewhere there should be a reference to where that is taken from, I think you'll find a reference to Gen 1. Now, in verse 5, "And said, For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh," and your reference will point to Gen 2. What does every freshman learn in a course on the Bible in our skeptical classrooms? That there are two accounts of creation, Gen 1 and Gen 2, and they're both in conflict. Isn't this interesting, that Jesus either is unaware of the conflict, or as the author of both Gen 1 and 2 He knew very well there was no conflict, in which case the joke is on the people who think there's a conflict. And it must say something about the fact that the way they perceive the story is somewhat flawed, so flawed that they really honestly have convinced themselves that there's a conflict there, they're unable to read is the problem. In all seriousness, they are unable to read the text. Here we have the author of the text interpreting the text for us, and we have professor after professor, textbook writer after textbook writer telling us all "Jesus is wrong, Jesus shares that 1<sup>st</sup> century Judaism, He was a man of His time, He was trapped in His own age, trapped in His own culture, He couldn't transcend His own culture, didn't really have the added benefits that we have today, and didn't really know what He was talking about." This is an example of why we say that the literal straightforward interpretation of Genesis that we have promoted is the same one you find in the New Testament. We've looked at numerous examples of this, you could turn to Matt 23:35 or Matt 24:37-41, time and again Jesus makes these blunders right. So to accommodate the Genesis text in one place requires us to accommodate Jesus in another place, and that's precisely why we have counterattack strategy, because these gimmicks don't work in the real world. If you relinquish over here you cause problems over here.

Now, another thing the NT does is, it not only affirms the OT but it also gives additional information that is even more literal than the Genesis text. 1 John 3:12 is an example of where the New Testament almost tells us how Cain slew his brother. Just a little verb stuck in here, but the verb may very well be asserting details about the first murder that are not recorded in Genesis. Verse 12 says we should "not [be] as Cain who was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, had his brother's were righteous." If you look up the word "slew" in the Greek the verb is "cut with a knife." This adds insight into perhaps how Cain got the idea how to kill his brother. Think about it, no TV, he couldn't learn about violence that way, didn't have any murder stories, where did Cain get the idea how to kill his brother? What

were knives used for prior to the murder? To kill lambs for sacrifice. So it's very easy to think about how Cain watched his father, Adam, slice the throat of a lamb, and it bled to death and that was a sacrifice. "Ah, gee, I wonder what would happen if I did that to little brother?" So, it's these little details.

If you really want to see a detail, turn to Jude 14. If Jude is Jesus' half brother, and it seems likely he was, this comes out of Jesus' own family where they taught and discussed the Bible, apparently in their home, part of their Jewish culture, and this obviously reflects their understanding of the Genesis text. Here Jude cites a guy from the pre-Flood world of Noah. "And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying..." Now one of the accommodationist's tactics to try to get more time in Genesis to fit evolution, is to stretch the genealogies in Gen 5 and 11. How do you stretch a genealogy? By claiming that one name is the grandfather or great grandfather of the next name rather than the father and by doing that you spread it apart. But "Excuse me, Jude says Enoch is the seventh generation from Adam" and you can go to Gen 5 and count and Enoch is the seventh. He doesn't allow us add generations in there. Jesus' family didn't believe that. That's what I mean when you start seriously looking at how the New Testament is treating the Old Testament it won't permit you to get fast and loose with it, it pins you down even more.

So, the traditional interpretation, and by tradition we mean the tradition of the Jews, the tradition of the apostles in the early church, this traditional interpretation has been with us for centuries. And the irony is, on the part of the accommodationist's, "Are you really going to claim that nobody really knew how to interpret Genesis until 1900?" Doesn't something strike you as kind of odd about that? The Holy Spirit wrote the text, the Holy Spirit taught the Jews and the Church and we have to wait until 1940 before we understand what really is going on in Gen 1? If we have to wait that long for Gen 1 do we have to wait until the year 3010 to find out what went on in Exodus? There's something wrong here, something doesn't fit. So that's the argument for the traditional interpretation being the correct one. I'm not saying that the tradition interpretation is always right, I'm just saying that on such a fundamental issue, if people haven't got Gen 1 right for 6,000 years what on earth are we doing with the rest of the Bible?

## **THE INTERRELATED STRUCTURE OF GENESIS**

Let's go to the interrelated structure of Genesis. Genesis is built with a certain logical coherence. Gen 1 and 2 very clearly mark off the Creation section of the text. Clearly 3-5 deals with the Fall and its results, it depicts the rise of civilization, the contamination, and

all the rest of it that's going on. Gen 6-8 are clearly dealing with the Flood, and 9-11 are dealing with the New World situation. Observe what happens. What do we learn about Creation? We learn that there are certain specific kinds; there are certain categories that are set up here, the Creator-creature distinction, the man-nature distinction. Those are distinctions that were set up and established at that point. They're inviolable, they never are transgressed.

We learned here that the introduction of evil, the origin of evil creates the curse of death, so we said evil has a point in time where it begins and goes on until God deals with it in the future.

That marks us off from being pagan; the pagans don't have an origin of evil, evil always was. Here we have a salvation and we have the concept of judgment for sin. And here we have the new heavens and the new earth. So we have in this microcosm of the first 11 chapters of Genesis the entire rest of the Bible depicted if you think about it, it's the whole story: origins, sin and salvation.

Now if you tamper with pieces of this, you rapidly create numerous problems. Think for example what happens if in Gen 1-2 you begin to expand the days into ages. Why would you do that? Because what you're trying to do is accommodate the text to what appears to be a very old universe, and the old parts of the universe have fossils in them, etc. and if that's the case, now what you have done is... the dominos start falling, if we do this little compromise here we wind up having to modify what we mean by this over here, now they claim that not all death starts in chapter 3, it's only the death of man that starts in 3. Before that we had plant and animal death going on for millions of years and this all makes up the fossil record so there was evil before the Fall so that when the Fall happens it becomes smaller, does it not? Don't you feel what's happening here, that this word death is now contracted down, now it's not a death inclusive of animals, we've got death going on before this if the days are ages. And what we've done is compromised this word "evil" too, because now it's not man and nature suffering that started at the Fall, it's only man's suffering. So storms, chaos, and things in nature that are bad must not really be bad, because they preceded the Fall and God said everything was good (1:31). If that's the case, then that also carries over further on down in the textual structure, because now that we've compromised those two things by making this little accommodation, now what happens in the area of salvation as portrayed by the Flood? If we have long ages then the fossil strata are laid down before the Flood and surely couldn't be a result of the Flood so the Flood gets localized into a running over of the Tigris-Euphrates river valley. So salvation and judgment get minimized. Logically it has to be that way because they

argue there's no evidence of a global Flood. That evidence was moved into creation week when they made the days into ages. And if that's the case, and the Flood was only local, and God said He'd never bring another one, what does that do to the future salvation of the new heavens and the new earth? There is none, it's just a subjective religious experience; redemption has nothing to do with the outside world. So it's a trivialization of the whole cross work of Jesus Christ, the whole plan of salvation is minimized.

I hope you see, this is one of many dramas that we could show, but you start fiddling around with how you interpret one part of the text, and you're going to get in hot water. And this is the lesson that we need to learn from the last 200 years of Church history, that every time you try to accommodate the text you wind up doing this, and that is why a group of men finally said in the 1950's and 60's, this has gone on long enough, we are not going to do this any more. As Christians we are going to submit to the text and if the text conflicts with the latest Darwinian theory then the text trumps, but we are not going to use a rubber Bible and stretch it any which way we want.

We come then to some of the final points where the Accommodationists have focused to get more time. We've already dealt with arguments to get more time into the creation week so we won't deal with that again. But there are other places, the Adam to Abraham genealogies in Gen 5 and 11, that's a favorite location for getting more time, especially I've found among professors of conservative seminaries, they're not convinced these are locked down. But the problem is the formula, when you have a formula that X lived  $n$  years and begat Y, and the days after he begat Y were  $n$  years, and all the days that X lived were  $n$  plus  $n$  years, it tends to give you the impression, whoever wrote it, meant that the days and the years be taken literally because he's adding them.

X lived  $n$  years and begat Y, and the days after he begat Y were  $n$  years, and all the days that X lived were  $n$  plus  $n$  years

1. Adam lived 130 years and begat Seth, and the days after he begat Seth were 800 years, and all the days that Adam lives were 130 plus 800 years.
2. Seth lived 105 years and begat Enosh, and the days after he begat Enosh were 807 years, and all the days that Seth lived were 105 plus 807 years.
3. Enosh lived 90 years and begat Kenan, and the days after he begat Kenan were 815 years, and all the days that Enosh lived were 90 plus 815 years.
4. Kenan lived 70 years and begat Mahalel, and the days after he begat Mahalel were 840 years, and all the days that Kenan lived were 70 plus 840 years.
5. Mahalel lived 65 years and begat Jared, and the days after he begat Jared were 830 years, and all the days that Seth lived were 65 plus 830 years.
6. Jared lived 162 years and begat Enoch, and the days after he begat Enoch were 800 years, and all the days that Jared lived were 162 plus 800 years.
7. Enoch lived 65 years and begat Methuselah, and the days after he begat Methuselah were 300 years, and all the days that Enoch lived were 65 plus 300 years.

He's locking it all up in a formula here. You can't play fast and loose through this stuff. I think a person with this problem has far more integrity just throwing the whole Bible out. But don't be a loose person and start using rubber to stretch the text to fit every little problem.

Another argument is the pre-Genesis 1 existence and we want to deal with this one because it seems to be coming back, for some ungodly reason in our own day, because some evangelicals are teaching that Gen 1:1, 2, 3, are to be interpreted such that v 3 becomes the first act of creation, so that the heavens and the earth that are in v 1 are speaking of what's happening beyond v 3, and the earth therefore, that appears in v 2 was preexisting. "The earth was without form and void," meaning that "When" God began to create, the condition of the earth was one of dark watery chaos that resulted from a judgment on a prior evil world and then God begins to create in v 3. It's that description in v 2 that throws people because they assume that darkness always refers to evil and not simply a physical description. Citation is made of Isa 45:18 for support but its been shown in great detail that the description in both passages is simply one of uninhabitable, the region or universe was not inhabitable, obviously in Gen 1:2 because the universe was not yet finished. If you start doing that don't kind of accommodation then "Excuse me, but where did the previous universe come from?" Beats me! So what we've given up is something really immense, really serious. Now we've lost God as the creator of all things, and what's so ironic about this is, this is exactly what we started the whole course with, many weeks ago when we read the *Enuma elish* epic, and how did it start, how did a pagan story of origins start? With watery chaos. What was part and parcel of the watery

chaos? The gods and goddesses and all else. The source of the universe was chaos, just as in the modern version the source of the universe is chaotic gas, so in the ancient paganism the source of the universe was chaotic water. But when evangelicals, of all people, began to slide their way through these first three verses, and began to interpret it such that the earth preexists the work of creation, once again this has ramifications over here and over there, especially with the Flood because if you've got a global Flood in v 2, which is what many who hold this view claim then what do you do with Noah's Flood. Now we've got two global Floods? It'd difficult enough to argue for one much less two. Where are the verses to back that up? They don't exist. And of course we can go to John 1, do you notice John saying anything about that? "In the beginning" was an earth along with the Word. No! John interprets Gen 1:1 as an absolute beginning. Let's conclude with that text because John cuts that off even as an interpretative possibility by something else he says further down in the text. John hastens to add in verse 3, and I wish some of the Jehovah's Witnesses would just forget their six week course in Greek and read v 3 along with v. "All things came into being by Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." Wouldn't you say that's pretty comprehensive; v 3 locks it up. V 3 prevents you from ever misinterpreting John the Apostle, and since John begins in v 1 quoting the very words of Gen 1:1, surely we have here his understanding of Gen 1.

Okay, so, those are some of the accommodation strategies. What we've done is reviewed language. I haven't gone into all the details, we'd be here for months but what I've tried to do is give you the overall argument, the overall strategy. You will run into combinations of what we said but the thing to remember is you can't keep all this in your head, you can't remember all the details. The best thing to do is just think of the basic issue, just the BASIC issue, and the basic issue is if you deny the word of God over here, and you're going to deny it every where else. Let it go one way and it will always take you to another place. That's why we Christian fundamentalists insist on the inerrancy and the authority of Scripture, not because we're defending a new idea, we're defending the location of the inerrancy. Always remember that. As a Christian don't be embarrassed when someone says "Oh you believe the Bible is without error." "Yes. Do you believe that you're without error?" I'm debating the location, but everybody holds to inerrancy, every man holds to inerrancy some where, that's your authority. So either man is inerrant, or the Scripture is inerrant, but it's not the case that we Christians are the only people that believe in inerrancy. We simply admit, very clearly for the entire world to see, where our inerrancy is. The world system is trying to cover up the fact that ultimately they too have inerrancy, which they locate in their own heart, it's an inerrant discerner of what's true and what's false. Next week we'll deal with the basic argument, not all the details, but the logic and structure of the issue in biology, the issue of evolution and creation.

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<sup>i</sup> Fosdick's sermon can be read at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5070/>

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