

THINGS USED TO BE DIFFERENT

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“Mommy, Mimi isn’t that old, is she?” This is the innocent response of a child upon hearing that Adam lived to be 930 years old (Genesis 5:5). It does not take long when reading through the book of Genesis to come across the vast old ages of the patriarchs. For instance, Methuselah, the oldest person we have on record, lived to be 969 years old (Genesis 5:27). So what do we tell our children and grandchildren when they question these long life spans? Are we supposed to divide the ages by a factor of ten, or did they not measure time the same way we do today? In teaching our children about these matters, it is important to reveal to them both the science and the Bible. While the media would have us to believe there is a battle between the Bible and science, the truth is that God is the Author of science. Science and the Bible fit together like a hand in a glove.

In answering this dilemma, we should demonstrate the scientific truth that this Earth used to be vastly different. In Genesis 1:31 we learn that “God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.” Imagine how pristine the water was in that beautiful garden. Try to picture how lush the vegetation would have been. There was no pollution from vehicles or factories. We had not yet filled schools with asbestos, or painted our homes with lead paint. Additionally, we had not yet sprayed various chemicals on the ground in an effort to control vegetation. We had not yet sprayed agent-orange on our armed forces or tried to relieve morning sickness by giving pregnant women thalidomide. Everything was “very good.”

In an attempt to describe the early conditions on the Earth, Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace described it as a “mantle of spring-like loveliness which seems to have prevailed over the whole globe.” E. H. Colbert noted: “In those days the Earth had a tropical climate over much of its land surface, and in the widespread tropical lands there was an abundance of lush vegetation.” When teaching our children about the vast old ages of the patriarchs we should first establish that the Earth they lived on was vastly different than what we see around us today.

We can prove that scientifically by showing our children the diaries of Admirals Byrd and Peary (who conquered adversity to reach the North and South Pole, respectively) who looked down into the ice and saw palm trees and fruit trees buried feet below in the ice. Another solid piece of evidence centers around the formation of coal. We know today that it takes tremendous amounts of organic vegetation to make coal. And yet, one of the largest coal reserves on our planet is Antarctica! This is proof that Antarctica has not always been a frozen barren waste land. Or we can show our children reports like the one out of the University of Colorado in 2004, in which they identified pine needles under 10,400 feet of ice in Greenland. Indeed, there once was a time in which this Earth was a mantle of spring-like loveliness.

When we are asked the question, “Why is it people die today?” we can give a long laundry list of reasons—cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s, congestive heart failure, etc. Many of these conditions have one factor in common. We know today that humans have over 1,600 harmful genetic mutations in our gene pool. Few families exist that are not affected by at least one of these harmful mutations. But we should ask ourselves the question: How many of these harmful mutations were present when God first created Adam and Eve? Absolutely none! Everything was “very good.” Remember, had Adam and Eve not sinned they were created in such a fashion that they could have lived forever—having access to the Tree of Life. Given that there were no genetic mutations, higher levels of oxygen, and the Earth - a mantle of spring-like loveliness, then why couldn’t the patriarchs have lived to vast old ages?

Having established the scientific side, one could then take children to the Bible and demonstrate that things were different back then as well. For instance, in Genesis 12:11-12 we find Abraham asking Sarah to tell the Egyptians that he was her brother, so they would not kill him. But notice Abraham says: “Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance...” Yet, have you ever calculated Sarah’s age when Abraham makes this comment? She’s pushing 70 years old! And yet Abraham was worried the Pharaoh would take her away because of her beauty. Avon and Mary Kay are good products—**but they are not that good**. Obviously, things were different back then.

So what changed the environment? What could have changed the Earth from a mantle of spring-like loveliness to what we have today? Quite simply, the Global Flood.