

After Eden – Chapter 12
Hermeneutical Gymnastics
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In this chapter Morris attempts to show that the interpretations used by old earth creationists are extreme, and not possible using good, sound biblical interpretation. What is really meant is that they are not possible using young earth creationist's rules and interpretations.

He starts out with a story about Bill Clinton...nice, but irrelevant. On the second page, he sets the tone, quoting a passage of scripture from Isaiah. In part, it warns of calling evil good, and darkness light. Since it is talking about moral absolutes, it has nothing to do with creationism, although Morris uses it to build up to his condemnation of old earth creationists. Hence, you see one popular tactic of young earth creationists...taking verses out of context to support their position.

Deconstruction of Scripture is Old News (Page 170)

Yes, this has always been done, and always will be done. In Jesus day, they had the Pharisees...in ours, we have our share of liberal scholars who take liberty with God's Word. Fortunately, progressive creationists are not liberal. We accept the inerrant Word of God, literally interpreted in Genesis.

On page 171, Morris makes the statement, "Sadly, all such schools place the filter of their own hermeneutic over the words of Scripture." His statement is true for many schools. It is especially true for young earth creationist schools, who use their young earth hermeneutic to insist the earth is young. They apply their "young earth" rules of ordinals with the word day, and no death before sin (they won't even consider it...all verses must be interpreted to support it). Since young earth scholars are so dogmatic in their approach to Scripture, they are the worst offenders of "applying their own hermeneutics."

He says that faithful pastors and theologians have a different agenda. I agree, a young earth agenda...no matter what the evidence, twist it to represent a young earth. What Morris is doing is imploring young earth creationists to only listen to young earth creationist teachers. This way, they can ignore the truth of science...they don't have to confront it if they don't hear it. They are proving Morton's Demon true (see www.answersincreation.org/mortond.htm).

Morris uses the example of the Pharisees, in an example to show how people today behave the same way as they do. But there is no comparison for progressive creationists. We do not add laws and regulations to Scripture, as the Pharisees did. Creation is not an issue of something that we have to obey, or some law we must follow, as the Pharisees taught. It is inappropriate to compare us to Pharisees, as this is like comparing apples and oranges.

Common Sense is Common Sense (Page 172)

He uses the quote, "If the plain sense makes common sense, then seek no other sense." I agree. If a person wants to take Genesis as plain sense, they are welcome to do so. However, if you apply this saying to Geology, then the common sense says the earth is billions of years old. If you apply this saying to Astronomy, then the common sense says the universe is billions of years old.

Since the earth and universe is obviously old, then the "days" of creation must be long ages. If one insists that "day" is 24 hours, then the Bible cannot be true. The old earth interpretation makes the most sense, and it maintains the inerrancy, infallibility, and literalness of Genesis. If you still want to say the plain sense of Genesis means six 24-hour days, then go ahead...but realize that old earth creationism is just another, equally valid interpretation of the Scriptures. Your different interpretation does not give you the right to talk down to fellow believers.

Truth Brings Clarity (Page 173)

Morris uses several quotes from Jesus, which have no bearing on creationism. He uses them to add to the emotional impact of his words and admonishments to fellow young earth creationists. Further down, he says the same scholars who claim to believe in the deity of Christ want to distort His words. Since the teachings of Christ have nothing to do with creation (other than the fact that he references it, without any claims of the duration of creation), it cannot be claimed that we have distorted His words. This amounts to nothing more than an empty emotional claim with no basis in fact.

At the top of page 174, he says "God makes a wonderful promise to liberally grant wisdom to us when we ask him for it." I agree, and it applies equally to old earth creationists. I pray for wisdom in understanding creationist arguments, and God grants that wisdom. Young earth creationists do the same for our old earth arguments. I'll come back to this at the end of this chapter.

Morris next throws in two pages of mostly emotional appeals. On page 175, he makes a distinction that young earth creationists represent "truth," "light," and "wisdom," with the implication that all others are evil deceivers. As a Christian brother, it is hard to understand how another brother can make such a slanderous, sinful claim against fellow believers. Such is the condition of young earth creationist leaders, that they are so brainwashed as to be blind to sins that they commit against other believers, in the name of young earth creationism. They justify their sins in the name of their crusade, blinded to the real truth.

Professional Jargon (Page 176)

Not much of significance here. Morris admonishes young earth creationists to ignore any evidence for an old earth. He claims we couch our research in fancy words to impress people. Scientific research involves scientific terms. There are no hidden agendas.

Obfuscation (Page 177)

Morris says of old earth creationists, "...they insist that the simple words of Scripture cannot be understood merely by reading them." Yes, they can be understood by simply reading them, and if the reader wants to accept them at face value, go ahead and do it. But if one wants to truly understand creation, he must study creation itself. This demonstrates a simple truth...the "how" of creation really isn't important...as long as you give God the glory, you're ok. As the young earth crowd claims, creation was written in simple terms, so that even a first grader could understand that God created. We are free, however, to move on to a college level understanding of creation. Stay at the 1st grade level if you want, but don't criticize us for wanting a deeper understanding of creation.

The Local Universal Flood (Page 178)

He starts out with little in the way of arguing against this. He gives a good sight-picture on page 179, of how old earth creationism appeals to the masses. He asks the question at the end, "If Christian leaders sell out the biblical record of the Flood to appease skeptics, on how many other biblical teachings must they sell out? First, we have not sold out the biblical record...we have sold out the young earth interpretation of the biblical record. Second, it was not done to appease skeptics...it was a necessity to maintain harmony of the Bible with science, but without harming either. Third, the answer is none. No other doctrines of the Bible are changed by accepting an old earth. Morris would have his readers think we are the worst thing to come along since the Pharisees, but nothing could be further from the truth. His lack of understanding of progressive creationism continues to astound me.

On page 180, Morris asks if the view of old earthers is "fundamentally at odds with the huge abundance of scientific evidence strongly supporting a geophysically necessary global Flood? In the minds of young earthers, they actually believe that the evidence shows a global flood. However, as I and others have pointed out, their so-called "model" for the Flood completely fails to be a workable solution. Contrary to Morris' claim that there is a "huge abundance of scientific evidence," there is actually no evidence. Morris has not presented any of this so-called evidence in this book.

Morris makes a big deal out of Ross' statement of the Flood only affecting humans and their domesticated animals. Of course, wild animals were killed in the flood also. In the sub-paragraph, he again says that the curse caused the ground to bring forth thorns and thistles. While there may not have been any thorns and thistles in Eden, they certainly existed outside of Eden. God could not have created them here after the Fall, since He had rested from His creative works at this point.

In sub-paragraph b, Morris talks about the earth being filled with violence. The implication here is that mankind had filled the earth, therefore you needed a global flood to kill them all. One only need look to the Tower of Babel to confirm this is not true. The people all congregated together in this region, as they were all of one language. Before the Flood, there was only one language, and there is no reason to suspect that man had filled the earth in only 1,300 years since the creation week.

God's use of the terms "all" and "every" present no problem for old earth creationists. The account of the Flood is written from man's viewpoint. From the point of view of Noah, sailing on the ark, it appears that "all" was wiped out, and that "every" place on earth was flooded. As far as Noah could see, there was only water. The language of God

is necessary. Had God said, "I'm going to send a local flood to wipe out everyone," they would have simply moved away for a few months. Was God lying by saying "every" and then only flooding a local area? No, because he killed every animal in the "known world" at that time. Just like the creation account, it is written from the point of view of a man, on the surface of the earth. From that point, every means "every," and all means "all."

Morris claims that "the local universal flood concept so belittles the nature and extent of God's judgment and Christ's restoration that it borders on blasphemy." In this statement, he is referring to 2 Peter 3. As an old earth creationist, I have absolutely no problems with this passage of Scripture, despite the mistaken idea from Morris that it conflicts with the local flood scenario. Again, Morris shows he really does not understand progressive creationism. If he did, he would not make such claims.

Good Fruit From a Rotten Root (Page 183)

Morris gives some arguments, all of which can be agreed upon by old earth creationists. Nothing that he presents is contrary to an old earth interpretation of the Scriptures.

Itching Ears (Page 185)

Morris quotes 2 Timothy 4:3-4, which is about lusts, and turning away from the truth. This has nothing to do with creation. Old earth creationists, particularly progressive creationists, have not turned away from the truth...we fully accept the inerrant Word of God. We have turned away from the young earth interpretation of the Word of God. There's a huge difference. Morris equates the young earth interpretation of God's Word to be equal to God's Word. I would think twice about taking this position.

Morris wraps up by saying there are false teachers, willing to "scratch this itch" even if it means justifying sinful cravings. Therefore he equates our belief in an old earth as sin.

Let's now go back and discuss the issue of God granting wisdom, and of sin. As Christians, we all have the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guides us, convicting us of sin. If our actions are sinful, then why hasn't the Holy Spirit convicted us of this sin? Why is it, when I pray for wisdom to understand young earth arguments, God grants me that wisdom?

Could it be that this is not a matter of sin? Could it be that what we think about the "how" of creation is not important to God? It would appear to be the case. God lets us argue these points back and forth, without convicting either side, through the Holy Spirit, that we are wrong. What is important is that we both have Jesus Christ. That really is the only important point from God's perspective.

Morris' claims in this book that we are sinful, amounts to sin itself. Matthew 18:15 says that if a brother sins against you, let him know. Mr. Morris, this business of falsely accusing brothers in Christ is irresponsible for a Christian brother. If God doesn't care how we view creation, who are you to impose your brand of creationism upon the church?