

## THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT

*John Edwards*

**IT IS INSPIRED.** These words did not originate with man, “*but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*” (2 Pet. 1:21). The tongue of the man was the instrument of the Holy Spirit as David said, “*The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue*” (2 Sam. 23:2). No other book is on par with the Bible!

**THE BOOKS.** One should take time to learn and readily locate the books of the Old Testament. They are 39 in number, from Genesis to Malachi.

**THE KEYNOTES.** Each book has been given a keynote that gives you the book in a word. Now would be a good time to write at the heading of each book its keynote: Genesis (origination), Exodus (passover), Leviticus (atonement), Numbers (sojourning), Deuteronomy (obedience), Joshua (possession), Judges (government), Ruth (redemption), Samuel, Kings and Chronicles (kingdom), Ezra Nehemiah (restoration), Esther (providence), Job (immortality), Psalms (coronation), Proverbs

(wisdom), Ecclesiastes (vanity), Song of Solomon (love), and Isaiah through Malachi (salvation in the One to come).

**THE DIVISIONS.** The Old Testament has 4 major divisions: 5 books of law (Genesis-Deuteronomy), 12 books of history (Joshua-Esther), 5 books of poetry (Job-Song of Solomon), and 17 books of prophecy (Isaiah-Malachi).

**THE PERIODS OF HISTORY.** There are 11 periods of history in the Old Testament: 1. Antediluvian (before the flood), 2. Postdiluvian (after the flood), 3. Patriarchal, 4. Bondage, 5. Wandering, 6. Conquest, 7. Judges, 8. United kingdom, 9. Divided kingdom, 10. Exile, 11. Return and restoration.

**THE DISPENSATIONS.** There are two dispensations in the Old Testament: 1. Patriarchal (Genesis-Exodus 19). 2. Mosaic (Exodus 20-Malachi).

**ITS PURPOSE.** The Old Testament was “*a shadow*” (Heb. 10:1) and “*figure*” (Heb. 9:9), made known sin (Rom. 7:7), brought men to Christ (Gal. 3:24), and is a system of “*learning*” (Rom. 15:4) and “*admonition*” (1 Cor. 10:6, 11).

**IT IS OLD.** The Old Testament is “*old*” not because it is older than the New Testament, but because God made it old (Heb. 8:13). It has been “*done away*” and we live under the “*new testament*” (2 Cor. 3:6-14).

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## THEORIES OF MEN ANSWERED IN GENESIS ONE

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The Bible often contradicts the conceptions and proposed explanations of men. Observe five theories of men answered in the first chapter of the Bible:

**THE BIG BANG THEORY.** “Scientists generally agree that ‘the Big Bang’ birthed the universe about 15 billion years ago. Out of this event — at a temperature of nearly a trillion degrees cubed — the building blocks of nature formed. They gathered and spun out matter, energy, space and time, and eventually stars, planets, galaxies, and life itself” (Tom Parisi, Northern Illinois University). Given the intelligent design and order throughout the universe, do you accept an origin by chance, without any reason or purpose? “*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things*

*which are seen were not made of things which do appear”* (Heb. 11:3; Gen. 1).

**THE GAP THEORY.** It is proposed that there was a long time gap between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. Genesis 1:1-2 grammar will not allow such a concept, and the very idea is contrary to the plain statement of Exodus 20:11, “*For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth...*”

**THE AGE THEORY.** The view has been advanced that the days of creation in Genesis 1 were not twenty-four hour periods, but long ages of hundreds and thousands, even millions of years in length. Genesis 1 shows the days divided into “*evening and morning*” (v. 5). Plants were made on the third day (vv. 11-13), and the sun did not appear until the fourth day (vv. 14-19). Could plants have survived for millions of years without sunlight? Verse 14 distinguishes days from years. If a day is millions of years, what are years? The same language used in Genesis 1 (*first day, second day, etc.*) is found also in Numbers 7 (with reference to the offerings of the

princes for the dedicating of the altar). Were the days of Numbers 7 ages or twenty-four hour periods? Still think Genesis 1 days were ages? Read Exodus 20:9-11.

**THE EVOLUTION THEORY.** Evolution is a theory that the various types of animals and plants have their origin in other preexisting types and that the distinguishable differences are due to modifications in successive generations. Genesis 1 affirms the law of reproduction according to species — after their kind (vv. 11-12, 20-21, 24-25). Apple seed produces apples. Cats give birth to cats. The fact that God’s creative work was “*finished*” eliminates any evolutionary development of new species (Gen. 2:1). Genesis also shows early man as an intelligent and highly skilled being. He did not mutter like a monkey or chatter like a chimpanzee, but possessed the power of language as “*Adam gave names to all cattle...*” (Gen. 2:20) and carried on conversation with God, His Maker.

**THE ONENESS GODHEAD THEORY.** Oneness Pentecostals suggest there is only one person

in the Godhead — Jesus only. Genesis 1:26 records, “*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...*” The plural personal pronouns “*us*” and “*our*” require a plurality of persons. The Bible reveals three persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) involved in the creation (Gen. 1:1-2; Job 33:4; Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2).

“*...let God be true, but every man a liar...*” (Rom. 3:4).

### HAVE YOU QUIT YOUR LYING?

Ephesians 4:25, “*Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*”

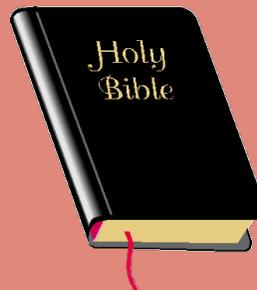
Revelation 21:8, “*But the fearful, and unbelieving, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*”

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