

Additional notes for teachers:

Many of the notes comprise deeper matters which have arisen in the course of preparation of the Students Notes. Other material has been appended for the purpose of providing background, explanations or interesting detail.

Lesson 3: MATTERS OF INTERPRETATION

Although the essential points in these early lessons are simple and straightforward enough, there is considerable risk of going beyond what is written. Almost every point in the opening chapters of Genesis is open to difference of interpretation and care must be exercised to state only facts without entering into the realm of interpretation.

It is not a question of what God could do because He is all-powerful and nothing is impossible to Him, but rather of what He did do or of what His Word reveals concerning His works.

All that can be said with certainty is that "God created" (this is to be insisted upon) and that Adam was created as a special act of creation about 6,000 years ago. When the process of creation began, or how long it took are matters of interpretation.

If Genesis 1:1 was "millions of years ago" then the subsequent acts could have taken place over a long period of time terminating about 6,000 years ago.

On the other hand, if the "days" are to be restricted to 24 hours, then the creation of the heaven and the earth in their present order was performed about 6,000 years ago. Each of these views has its problems and it is not wise to dogmatise. Refer to Elpis Israel, chapter 2; and Believing the Bible, pp. 131-134. We should be careful not to restrict our conception of God's power, and at the same time we should not dogmatise on uncertain and immaterial details.

CREATION OR EVOLUTION?

Scholars may be perplexed by the conflict in thought between creation and evolution. The teacher should be prepared to explain in simple terms the difference in emphasis in the two ideas, pointing out such features as the impossibility of dismissing the idea of God by accepting the evolutionary view.

Even Darwin in his Origin of Species speaks of the Creator breathing life into the earliest forms from which he suggests all others have descended. The constantly changing theories of evolution; and the fact that many scientists of repute are opposed to the concept of evolution are other features of mention.

TEACHING METHODS

1. Arouse interest in this lesson by using absorbing illustrations, facts and figures.
2. Enlarge on the statement, "In the beginning", only insofar as the age and aptitude of the class requires.
3. Be prepared to answer questions on the order of creation, scientific opinions and the like.
4. Impress upon scholars the marvels of creation which reflect the glory of God.