


## ***Florida College, Ferrell Jenkins and Making Sense Of It All***

*(by Steven J. Wallace)*

Many of you may have gone to the Florida College lectures of 2000. Likewise many of you may have received an email from Ferrell Jenkins urging you to go to his web page and read his transcript of his speech at the last Florida College lectureship. We gladly provide Mr. Jenkins' entire transcript [here](#). 

I would urge you to go there and confirm the quotes that are found in this article too. Brother Jenkins was supposed to make sense of days of Genesis 1 in his speech but if you heard it or read it, you will readily admit that his sense is not biblical sense but rather, nonsense, what uninspired men have thought about the days of Genesis. It is truly heart wrenching to read brother Jenkins' speech and yet I am hard pressed by the scripture to not think of men above that which is written (I Corinthians 4:6). And so with this mindset, I write the following. This is not motivated with any personal animosity toward brother Jenkins, but only for the love of precious truth and my utter repulsion for falsehoods (Ps. 119:104; Rom. 12:9).

### **CANNOT SAY "MUST"**

Brother Jenkins jukes the issue by saying, *"Now I think we run into a problem when we say 'must.' One of these views 'must' be correct. And I've got a good brother friend who said one place that these 'must be long ages.' And I can't say that. But on the other hand, I can't say that they 'must be 24-hour ages'"* (p. 8).

If we cannot be dogmatic on the "length" of the creation week, why be intolerant regarding other views that relate to the "how" of creation? Why not say regarding Theistic Evolution, *"Now I think we run into a problem when we say 'must.' One of these views 'must be correct. And I've got a good brother friend who said one place that 'creation must have been processes of evolution.'" And I can't say that. But on the other hand, I can't say that 'creation must have been a instantaneous historical singular event without any macro-evolutionary processes involved."*

How does such a statement help one make sense of the events in Genesis 1? What makes sense to me is that Mr. Jenkins would be able to say they "must be 24 hour days" if he would once again begin speaking as the "oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). Recall the oracles of God as they were given to his servant Moses, *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it"* (Exodus 20:8-11).

Here are some questions that I would readily submit to Mr. Jenkins and his "good brother friend" (presumably, Shane Scott) to entertain us with.

- 1) Was the Sabbath day a month, a season, a year, a long duration of time or “must” it be in its historical setting, a 24 hour day?
- 2) How many hours did Israel keep as holy when they kept the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8)? As a side note, how long is the first day of the week as noted in Acts 20:7? Can one be dogmatic?
- 3) Did the Jews perceive the Sabbath as an epoch of time or “must” it be understood as a 24 hour day?
- 4) Were the six days in which all of Israel were permitted to work six long ages of time or was it six 24 hour days (Exodus 20:9)? Can one say they “must” be six days, dear brother?
- 5) Why did the Lord bless the Sabbath day and hallow it (Exodus 20:11)?
- 6) How long was the seventh day that Jehovah rested and was “refreshed” (cf. Exodus 31:17)?
- 7) How can you understand the “days” that are mentioned in Exodus 20:8-10 as literal 24 hour days but not the days of Exodus 20:11?
- 8) Why did Jehovah parallel the work week to creation, but the scripture is silent regarding such a parallel to the Sabbath year (seventh year) and Jubilee (forty-ninth year, see Leviticus 25).

Mr. Jenkins used to believe that the creation of man and woman were at the beginning of creation and not millions and perhaps even billions of years after the creation. The position of long ages creates a puzzling problem of reconciliation with Jesus’ statements in the New Testament (i.e., Mark 10:6; Matthew 19:1-5). Such false doctrine makes the creation of man near the end of time, not the beginning of creation. Brother Jenkins once wrote:

*“Theistic Evolution has been called the ‘third alternative’ to the problem of origins. It is the view that God created the basic forms originally but has allowed everything to evolve along naturalistic lines, over millions of years. . . Genesis teaches that God created all living forms in six days and then rested from all his work (Gen. 1:1-2:3). See also Heb. 4:3-4. . . Jesus gave His approval to the creation account in Gen. 1 and 2. Read Mt. 19:1-5. At the BEGINNING, God MADE them MALE (man) and FEMALE (wife).”<sup>1</sup>*

It is baffling how brother Jenkins can be tolerant regarding uniformitarianism and yet intolerant of Theistic Evolution. What is it that makes one reject evolution but not uniformitarianism when both rest on unproven assumptions.

### **E-GOSSIP?**

On Ferrell's web page he mentions Thomas G. O'Neal (p. 2). Interestingly, in his speech he uses condemnatory language of brethren, saying, “. . . I hadn't seen [this issue] discussed in the papers for a long time [before the 99 lecture]. In the last year, there have been articles dealing with it. There has been 'e-gossip' dealing with it; you understand what I mean [audience laughter]. And some brethren have been sent to the "electronic mail chair" [more laughter]" (brackets are his, sjw).

Now think about it, dear reader, when brethren deal with "it. . .the issue," they are committing "e-gossip" and sending some poor brethren to the "electronic mail chair." However, when Ferrell mentions Tom O'Neil on his web page, he is not dealing with "it. . .the issue" and of course I guess, not committing any "e-gossip" or sending brother O'Neil to the "electronic mail chair." Is there a double standard here? I cannot make sense of it!

### OUT OF CONTEXT?

Ferrell's e-mail (June 18, 2000) cries that he was taken out of context and urges brethren to read the transcript. I have read the transcript and have not been convinced that he was taken out of context at all! He never shows us on his web page how he is taken out of context. Yet Ferrell in writing about Foy Wallace says:

*"This gap theory was held by Harry Rimmer. When I was growing up every young preacher had to have his books to learn how to preach on Bible and Science. After all, Foy Wallace had used it in his book God's Prophetic Word---didn't give credit, but he did. I don't always give credit in my sermons either. . .Well anyway, in the 20th century, Foy Wallace held this view in his book God's Prophetic Word. He said, " 'in the beginning God' is a phrase that defines remote antiquity hidden in the depths of eternal ages"."* (p. Ferrell then writes, "As we come toward the end of this presentation I want to ask a question of all of you. Are these men, such as Foy Wallace, R. L. Whiteside, C. R. Nichol and all the others that held the gap theory old earth or young earth advocates? Looks to me like they are old earth advocates, doesn't it? But see, that is the way they accounted for this problem" (p. 7, his emp.).

I wonder if Mr. Jenkins was doing some "e-gossip" when he slandered the late Foy Wallace as believing in an old earth view? Here is what Foy Wallace wrote on the matter:

*"Much argument has been made as to whether the record of Genesis is scientifically correct and historically accurate. Some men in the realm of science complain that the Bible teaches that the earth is only six thousand years of age. But science claims for it a much higher antiquity than that. Some **men in the scientific world assume too many things. They assume about everything they say on matters of religion, and they assume some things they say that are not matters of religion.** There is no statement in the Bible which indicates the age of the earth. 'In the beginning God' is a phrase that defines a period of remote antiquity, hidden in the depth of eternal ages. If the scientist, or the pseudo-scientists, want to ascribe to the earth the age of millions or billions of years, **let their imagination play on, and their fancy with it,** but when they get back to the beginning, it will be the beginning of the first sentence in the Bible, 'In the beginning God.'*

*We make no charges against science. There is no conflict between the Bible and science. The word 'science' means 'to know,' and there is not anything any man can prove that he knows that contradicts the Bible. Science and the Bible go hand in hand.*

*They are halves of the same sphere. Properly considered, they illumine one another. They are co-servants. Like locomotives running on parallel tracks, they cannot collide. But the man of science is not always scientific, and the man in religion is not always biblical. It is when the man of science gets unscientific or the man in religion gets unbiblical, that the clash comes”* (emp. mine, God's Prophetic Word, p. 16).

Where does Foy Wallace say that he is “gap theorist”? Does Mr. Jenkins have Wallace letting his “*imagination play on, and his fancy with it*” by making him believe in millions of years? Does it sound like brother Wallace shows very much sympathy to old earth scientists when he speaks in such a way? It sounds like Brother Wallace espouses the Gap Theory as much as he does the Revelation Day Theory or Day Age Theory. Simply because one denies to know the exact age of the earth does not make him endorse uniformitarian geology and its ridiculous time table. Furthermore, how can Mr. Jenkins know for sure what Wallace meant regarding “ages” when he cannot say one way or the other what the author of Genesis meant regarding “day”?

Folks, the man of religion gets unbiblical when he embraces the assumptive doctrine of uniformitarianism (the idea that all processes have continued at a constant/uniform rate since the beginning). In order for science to prove this, science would have had to observe and measure all processes from the beginning until now! Since this is an impossibility, true science cannot advocate such as fact but only as an assumption. Furthermore, the man of religion is unbiblical when he espouses such because he stands in direct contradiction to the inspired apostle Peter, “*knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation'*” (II Pet. 3:3, 4). This idea of “*all things*” continuing as they were from the beginning is something that the apostle emphatically denies by giving reference to the worldwide cataclysmic flood (vv. 5, 6). Yet, all long-age-time-buying theories rest upon this uniform idea. The point is this, Ferrell wants us to believe that Foy Wallace accepted the Gap Theory to unify science and scripture, but he is a far cry from proving his case.

Brother Jenkins also condemned brethren who use email as a tool to teach against and review error, but he can use the email and the web to condemn Tom O'Neil. He writes, “*And once E-mail came in, brethren started to condemn people on E-mail. Without ever studying with them. Without ever talking to them*” (p. 8, 9). Wonder if we say, “*Since the pulpit came in, brethren started to condemn people from the pulpit. Without ever studying with them. Without ever talking to them.*” He continues to speak down on e-mail, yet he uses it! My prayer to God is that brethren will understand that the problem is not email or tactics of faithful brethren, but rather false teachers and false doctrine.

Now if brother Jenkins has ever spoken against denominational preachers or any person without ever studying with them, he has condemned his own ways. And yet he has led us to believe that he has done just that! Has he spoken with Foy Wallace about this issue to know if he truly endorsed the Gap Theory or not? He never said that he has. Perhaps we cannot review what anyone has written without talking to them first, but if

they are deceased, as brother Wallace is, then we can speak for them and about them? It just doesn't make any sense!

### QUOTING MEN

Even if brother Jenkins is right regarding Foy Wallace's position, what is the point in quoting him? The focus of his lecture was to quote all sorts of people who may or may not have been sympathetic toward long age theories (yet he found no time to deal with Exodus 20). In a postscript of his lecture as found on his web page, Ferrell writes:

*“In his classes, which followed mine, Wolfgang cited numerous Restoration thinkers who advocated to some extent, or at least allowed the possibility of an old earth. These included Alexander Campbell, Robert Milligan, Alfred Fairhurst, Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, Hall L. Calhoun, W.W. Otey, Jack Wood Sears, Donald England, Rita Rhodes Ward.”*

What is the point, and why should we care? How does this settle the issue today? Are we not to be independent thinkers? Imagine if we were discussing the controversy of the *American Christian Missionary Society* and we used this same kind of reasoning. *“Numerous Restoration thinkers who advocated to some extent, or at least allowed the possibility of the church forming a human institution like the American Christian Missionary Society for doing the church's work were: Alexander Campbell who was the first president of it in 1849. The first four vice-presidents were D S. Burnet, John O'Kane, John T. Johnson, and Walter Scott. John M. Bramwell was secretary. L.L. Pinkerton was called to chair. After the first convention was over, 20 total vice presidents were appointed. Among those already mentioned, Tolbert Fanning, T. M. Allen, W. K. Pendleton.”*<sup>2</sup> It is even said of J. W. McGarvey that he was an ardent supporter of Missionary Societies.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps we should apologize to the Christian Church and the institutional church for the dogmatism that was shown toward them regarding these things? Perhaps we should quote to those who opposed human institutions in the 1950's the words of the great thinkers in the 1800's who were sympathetic towards the *American Christian Missionary Society* (an institution that was built to do the work of the church which ultimately resulted in the formation of the Christian Church denomination). And why not throw in the lovely quote, *“A trickle of dogmatism can grow to a tide of dogma in which are drowned true Christian liberty and the noble spirit of the Restoration Movement which speaks where the Bible speaks and remains silent where the Bible is silent.”* I wonder if Mr. Koltenbah and brother Jenkins are being dogmatic about a trickle of dogmatism? Perhaps we should use less dogmatism to those who reject Darwinian evolution but accept Theistic evolution since they still maintain a belief in God. Should we be less dogmatic to those who believe that Jesus is the Savior but reject his virgin birth and resurrection; to those who believe there is one true God but reject the deity of Christ, etc.? And yet, it is those who are placing gaps of ages in the inspired record who are not speaking as the Bible speaks! The spirit of the Restoration Movement is always hindered when brethren start speaking where the Bible has not spoken and begin redefining Bible terms into contradictory definitions!

I prefer “A trickle of presumption and timidity can grow to a tide of dubious doubting in which are drowned true Christianity.” “But this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Galatians 2:4, 5). Would Paul’s conduct have stifled the spirit of the Restoration had he been here today? Folks, dogmatism is not the problem, but which dogma is the best dogma to be dogmatized with?

When brethren started speaking about organizing and attributing a work to the universal church on earth in the 1800’s, the Restoration Movement was hindered. The problem was not dogmatism, but rather, creating something that the New Testament did not authorize. Likewise, when brethren started assuming they could worship God with mechanical instruments when the New Testament was silent on the matter, the Restoration Movement was hindered. When brethren began placing doctrinal matters in the context of Romans 14 and pleading the Rodney King plea "Can't we all just get along," the Restoration Movement was hindered. When brethren start defending and redefining who a false teacher is, when brethren begin accusing the innocent warrior of truth as being one who is a “troubler of Israel” or "e-gossips," the Restoration Movement is hindered. Mark it down, brethren, we have an element among us which is fixed on denominationalizing the Lord’s church by teaching and promoting divisive diabolical doctrines.

### **IS THERE A PLACE?**

Ferrell asks, “*Is there a place for two who strongly believe in creation but who hold differing views on the days of Genesis?*” (p. 8).

Why not ask, “Is there a place for two who strongly believe in creation but who hold differing views on how things were brought into existence?” Is there a place in our congregations for two who believe in creation but hold opposing views regarding instantaneous creation? One believes that God instantaneously created and the other believes that God created life but allowed it to evolve to its present level of organization through countless processes over millions of years. Is there a place in our congregations for two who believe in the creation but one thinks Genesis is not the accurate word of God? Is there a place in our congregations for two who believe in creation but one believes that Adam and Eve were mythological symbols of some hidden truth but not the literal first couple? Is there a place in our congregations for two brothers who believe in creation but one believes that there was a subhuman and soulless race which predated Adam but was able to mix and assist man to procreate and fill the earth? These beliefs are often the catalyst for attributing long ages to the days of Genesis and are the mutational unfit offspring of evolution. And if we take these to their end, then we really do not need to be so concerned about preaching the gospel to all of the world for their may be some of those “soulless” creatures who appear human today but do not bear Jehovah’s image. The real question is this, “Is there a place in our congregations where two brothers may believe in creation but one does not accept what Moses wrote?”

Remember the eternal principle that Jesus uttered John 5:46, 47, "*For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?*" In essence, is there a place in our congregation for Jannes and Jambres who resisted Moses (II Timothy 3:8)? If we can redefine the term "day," why not redefine "sin," "curse," and the like? Does it matter what we believe regarding Genesis, and is there place for contradictory beliefs regarding our origin and such in our congregations?

The answer to our inquisitive brother is, yes there is a place. There is a place for them both as there is a place for weeds and wheat in the same field (cf. Matthew 13:24-30). Yet the place that compromisers of Christ occupy in churches of Christ was not given to them by our Lord, but the wicked one. "*Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted*" (Matthew 15:13). Awe, it makes perfect sense now. There is nothing in the Biblical account that makes us reach for long ages, but rather when we begin placing more faith in scientists than in the power of God.

*"Having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away"* (II Timothy 3:5). "*And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh*" (Jude 22, 23).

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- 1) Jenkins, Ferrell, *Introduction to Christian Evidences*, (p. 27. 1989).
  - 2) West, Earl Irvin, *The Search For The Ancient Order*, (chapter 9, vol. 1).
  - 3) Ibid. (p. 305).