

How about those long lifespans in the Bible?

Over the years, there have been Bible scholars who have attempted to reconcile these long ages by suggesting a different reckoning of time. Maybe they were counting months and calling them years back then. Such an explanation runs into other problems:

1. It doesn't explain why there is a gradual decrease in these lifespans. If this were about differing standards of time, we should see people living until 900, and then 80. However, there is a gradual decrease 900...800...700...600, etc. By the time of Abraham, we see people living to 175. By the time of Moses, some are living like Moses and Aaron to 110-120. By David's time the lifespan looks like today. Unless there were multiple standards, it is not likely that we can explain this in terms of time standards.
2. If we make the years months, or short enough to fit within our lifespans, there will be a problem with some of the birthdates of the sons. For example, Kenan, who has a son at 70, would be as if he were 9.
3. Abraham, who lives to 175, was a Sumerian. The Sumerians had a lunar calendar.

So, if we can't explain this in terms of standards of time measurement, how do we answer the question? I would suggest that there was a gradual contraction in the life span. The entry of sin into the world introduced a process of genetic breakdown which would culminate in death. But it didn't happen all at once.

There is some good science to back up the possibility of longer lifespans.

1. New research into aging shows that there is a cap on our chromosomes called a telomere. It becomes shorter with every division. That is why we age, despite the fact that we are constantly replacing cells. When the telomere gets too short, the cell is subjected to serious damage. If God's original design for Adam and Eve was for them to live without death, then it seems reasonable that they would have had telomeres which do not shorten.
2. Scientists also point out that a gene pool of perfect individuals would not degrade immediately. It would take many generations for

genetic defects to build in sufficient numbers to compromise the longevity in a serious way.

3. There is also evidence that senscence (aging) is heavily effected by cosmic radiation. This radiation produces free radicals which slam into our cells and cause major cell damage. There is evidence that the amount of cosmic radiation was much lower until 30,000 years ago.

4. Research into aging has proven that a lower caloric intake increases lifespan. It is not due to a simple reduction in metabolism. There is a more sophisticated system, but the bottom line is that a diet rich in plant foods and a more limited caloric diet could have been a piece of this longevity puzzle.

The Biblical account of these long lifespans may not be as fantastic as it seems. That's a quick synopsis. For some additional reading, click on these links:

<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/1978>

<http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/longlife.html>

This second site is rather technical, but has some awesome proofs. Hope that helps.

Steve