

TOOLS FOR TEACHING

Volume 2: Six Literal Days or Millions of Years?

Outline

Some people believe God created, but they deny Creation took place in six normal-length days. Does it matter whether God took six days or millions of years to bring about the universe?

1. Age-dating methods:

- a. All age-dating methods are based on assumptions about the past that cannot be proven.
- b. 90% of all age-dating methods give dates far *younger* than secular scientists require.
- c. Careful study of Biblical chronology yields a date for the universe of only a few thousand years.

2. Positions attempting to add man's theories of "millions of years" to the Bible:

- a. Gap Theory: There is a gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.
- b. Day-Age Theory: The days in Genesis 1 represent long periods of time.
- c. The universe existed for millions of years before creation.

3. Biblical uses of the word "day":

- a. The Hebrew word for day (*yom*) is used 2,301 times in the Old Testament. Outside of Genesis 1:
 - *Yom* + ordinal number (used 410 times) always indicates an ordinary day.
 - The words "evening" and "morning" together (38 times) always indicate an ordinary day.
 - *Yom* + "evening" or "morning" (23 times each) always indicates an ordinary day.
 - *Yom* + "night" (52 times) always indicates an ordinary day.
- b. Genesis 2:4—*Yom* is not qualified with a number or the phrases "evening and/or morning," and represents a period of time.
- c. Exodus 20:11—The basis for our week is the six days of creation and one day of rest.
- d. The Israelites walked around Jericho for seven days, *not* an indeterminate number of days.
- e. Jonah was in the whale for three days, not three thousand years.
- f. 2 Peter 3:8—In context, this verse is showing God is outside of time, and is not attempting to define a "day."

Conclusion: Biblical authority and infallibility are called into question if God did not create in six Earth-rotation days. If the Bible is wrong when it speaks of God creating in six days, why is it not wrong when it speaks of the Virginal Conception or the Resurrection of Christ? The foundations of Christianity are based firmly in the words of Scripture, which state clearly that God created all things in six days.

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James Dobson, response from Tessa Camp, Focus on the Family correspondence department, November 11, 1997.

... But the sun was not created until the fourth day; so was the first 'day' really a day? I don't know. I'm not sure which interpretation of God's Word is accurate...

Don Stoner, *A New Look at an Old Earth*, 1985, page 37.

The young-earth teaching is, at least in part, the result of theologians forming dogmatic theories after examining the biblical evidence and paying insufficient attention to God's creation. ... Christians are often inclined to take the young-earth position simply because it appears to be the plainest reading of the Bible.

Pattle T. Pun, "A Theology of Progressive Creationism," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, volume 39, number 1, March, 1987.

It is apparent that the most straightforward understanding of the Genesis record, without regard to all of the hermeneutical considerations suggested by science, is that God created heaven and earth in six solar days, that man was created in the sixth day, that death and chaos entered the world after the Fall of Adam and Eve, that all of the fossils were the result of the catastrophic universal deluge which spared only Noah's family and the animals therewith.

Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey Of Old Testament Introduction*, pages 196–197.

From a superficial reading of Genesis 1, the impression would seem to be that the entire creative process took place in six twenty-four-hour days. If this was the true intent of the Hebrew author ... this seems to run counter to modern scientific research, which indicates that the planet Earth was created several billion years ago. The more recently expanded knowledge of nuclear physics has brought into play another type of evidence which seems to confirm the great antiquity of the earth, that is, the decay of radioactive minerals.

Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, volume 1, 1871, pages 570–571.

It is of course admitted that, taking this account by itself, it would be most natural to understand the word in its ordinary sense; but if that sense brings the Mosaic account into conflict with facts, and another sense avoids such conflict, then it is obligatory on us to adopt that other.

Dr James Boice, *Genesis: an Expositional Commentary*, volume 1, 1982, pages 57–60.

We have to admit here that the exegetical basis of the creationists is strong. ... In spite of the careful biblical and scientific research that has accumulated in support of the creationists' view, there are problems that make the theory wrong to most (including many evangelical) scientists. ... Data from various disciplines point to a very old earth and an even older universe...

Milton Keynes, *Salt Magazine: for All Ages*, January–March, 1998, page 29.

When was the universe made?

quotes

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The study of palaeontology has rendered it virtually impossible for a serious scientist to make a case for a six day creation about six thousand years ago, as Christians would once have believed without question. At the same time, the study of ancient literatures has rendered it understandable that the first chapters of Genesis should use the kind of language technically known as “mythological” to explain the origins of the universe.

Martin Luther, *What Martin Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian*, page 1,523

The “Days” of Creation Were Ordinary Days in Length

We must understand that these days were actual days (*veros dies*), contrary to the opinion of the holy fathers. Whenever we observe that the opinions of the fathers disagree with Scripture, we reverently bear with them and acknowledge them to be our elders. Nevertheless, we do not depart from the authority of Scripture for their sake.

Martin Luther, *What Martin Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian*, page 1,523.

How long did the work of Creation take?

When Moses writes that God created heaven and earth and whatever is in them in six days, then let this period continue to have been six days, and do not venture to devise any comment according to which six days were one day. But, if you cannot understand how this could have been done in six days, then grant the Holy Spirit the honor of being more learned than you are. For you are to deal with Scripture in such a way that you bear in mind that God Himself says what is written. But since God is speaking, it is not fitting for you wantonly to turn His Word in the direction you wish to go.

Recommended resources:

The (Revised and Expanded) Answers Book, by Ken Ham, Carl Wieland, and Jonathan Sarfati, edited by Dr Don Batten

Creation magazine quarterly subscription

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discussion

1. How does denying that God created in six Earth-rotation days lead to the crumbling of the foundations of Christianity?

Answer: Biblical authority and infallibility are called into question if God did not create in six Earth-rotation days as Genesis 1 clearly teaches. If the Bible is wrong when it speaks of God creating in six days, why is it not wrong when it speaks of the Virginal Conception or the Resurrection of Christ? The foundations of Christianity are based firmly in the words of Scripture, which state clearly that God created in six actual days.

2. How do we know the days mentioned in Genesis 1 refer to normal-length days and not long periods of time?

Answer: Biblical uses of the word “day”:

- The Hebrew word for day (yom) is used 2,301 times in the Old Testament.
- Outside of Genesis 1: Yom + ordinal number (used 410 times) always indicates an ordinary day.
- The words “evening” and “morning” together (38 times) always indicate an ordinary day.
- Yom + “evening” or “morning” (23 times each) always indicates an ordinary day.
- Yom + “night” (52 times) always indicates an ordinary day.
- Exodus 20:11—The basis for our week is the six days of creation and one day of rest.
- The Israelites walked around Jericho for seven days, not an indeterminate number of days.
- Jonah was in the whale for three days, not three thousand years.
- 2 Peter 3:8, in context, is showing God is outside of time, and is not attempting to define a “day.”

3. Why is it not a problem that the Sun was created on Day Four, and not on Day One?

Answers:

- a. We know today that all it takes to have a day-night cycle is a rotating Earth and light coming from one direction. The Bible tells us clearly that God created light on the first day, as well as the Earth. Thus we can deduce that the Earth was already rotating in space relative to this created light.
- b. God can, of course, create light without a secondary source. We are told that in the new heavens and Earth there will be no need for sun or moon (Revelation 21:23). In Genesis, God even defines a day and a night in terms of light or its absence. (For more information, see “How could the days of Genesis 1 be literal if the Sun wasn’t created until the fourth day?” by Jonathan Sarfati on www.AnswersInGenesis.org.)