

How Long Did Creation Take?

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Psalms 33:6-9, among many other passages of Scripture, provide us with a commentary in Genesis 1:1-2:3. Compare the phrase God spake with God said in Genesis 1:1. Both passages affirm that God created the heavens and the earth by His Word of command.

Unbelieving men, some of whom are scientists, believe the earth evolved over millions of years (how there could have been years during the time the supposed evolution was taking place, they do not seem to know). Nothing in the Biblical record indicates such time was needed. We believe the days of Genesis 1, 2 are twenty-four hour periods, but we do not believe it took God six days or twenty-four hours to do anything. He spake and it was done!

We have a high regard for true science or knowledge, the meaning of the word science. However, we do not seek to confirm God's Word by science. Instead, we identify true science by God's Word. Scientific theories are another matter, whether it be the theory of evolution or the theory of theistic evolution, the big bang theory, or any other unproven philosophical theory of men. To such we do not give any credence. Men's theories are always changing and never can be proven.

We have an even higher regard for the Words of Scripture that we do for true science, for the best knowledge of men is always partial and incomplete. God's Word, being directly inspired by Him, is always correct, Cf. 2 Timothy 3:16. The words of Scripture are pure words according to Psalm 12:6 and are always the truth (John 17:17; Psalm 119:160).

The Scriptures teach that God ended all his work which he had made at the end of the sixth day and rested on the seventh day from all his work, Cf. Genesis 2:1-2. This proposition is supported by four conclusive facts in

Genesis 1: 1-2:3 which we will consider in this message.

God Called the Cycle of Light and Darkness Day (Genesis 1:3-5)

Some believe the days of Genesis 1 are indefinite periods or ages, not twenty-four hour periods. The word day is sometimes used figuratively in Scripture for unspecified periods of time. 2 Peter 3:8-10 gives us an example of the figurative use of the word day. *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."* No word, however, can be used in its figurative sense until its literal or actual meaning has first been established. The figurative or spiritual usage will make no sense at all if its literal or natural meaning is not understood. Christ is called the Rock in 1 Corinthians 10:4, but this metaphor would have no significance if one did not first know what an actual rock is. Thus, we read in 1 Corinthians 15:46, *"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."*

God first made the light to shine by His Word of command: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). God is light (1 John 1:5), and He is the source of all light, whether natural or spiritual. In the same way in which He caused the light to shine in the midst of the darkness which was upon the face of the deep, He has caused light to shine in the darkness of men's sinful hearts 2 Corinthians 4:6 declares, *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* God also caused the light to shine when He sent His Son, who is the light of the world (John 8:12), to dwell among men. Having created the light, God saw that it was good (Genesis 1:4). It is

interesting to note that when the Lord Jesus was baptized, the Father also saw that what He had done was good and declared with His voice from heaven, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 3:17). After proclaiming that the light was good, God then divided the light from the darkness (Genesis 1:4). The order here is significant: He did not separate the darkness from the light; He separated the light from the darkness. Likewise, His people, whom He calls the light of the world are to separate themselves from the people of the world who dwell in darkness. "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*" (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Genesis 1:5 explains that God called the light day and the darkness night. To this very time in history men still use these same terms to distinguish between the light and the darkness. But Genesis 1:5 tells us something else: the entire period bounded by the evening and the morning was also called day. Again, this very same terminology is still used universally. Any twenty-four period is officially called day, even in 2009.

Genesis 1:5 establishes the length of the day. It is the period consisting of both darkness or night and light or day. God, not the sun, determines the length of the day. The sun was not fitted to rule the day or light until the fourth day (Genesis 1:14-19). Yet the length of the days before the fourth day and length of the days after the fourth day were exactly the same. If they were not the same in duration, then the first week of seven days would have lacked uniformity. The sun did not change the day; it only ruled or had dominion over that portion in which there was light.

God Bounded the Day With Evening and Morning (Genesis 1:5)

Both day and night are used figuratively in Scripture at times, yet there is no passage in which either a figurative evening or figurative morning is

used to bound a figurative day or figurative night. In its metaphorical or figurative usage, the word day is used only of the light, not of the darkness. 1 Thessalonians 5:5 states, "*Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*" The words evening and morning appear together in the following verses of Scripture: Exodus 18:13; 27:21; Leviticus 24:3; Psalm 65:8; and Daniel 8:26. In none of these passages is either word used in a metaphorical sense. The first usage of evening after Genesis 1 is very obviously used literally. Genesis 8:11 declares, "*And the dove came in to him in the evening; and lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off:*" so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. Similarly, in its first appearance after Genesis 1, the word morning is used in a literal sense in Genesis 19:15, "*And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.*"

Each of the six days is said to have begun when the evening began. Evening is mentioned first because it contains the night and darkness which denotes the order of natural things due to angelic sin. God has created darkness as a consequence of sin (Isaiah 45:7) even as He created death as a consequence of sin (Romans 5:12). Mankind experiences darkness spiritually before he does light. "*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light*" (Ephesians 5:8). God does not reveal anything in Scripture just to satisfy our curiosity; everything He has given us in His Word is designed to teach us spiritually what we need to know. Neither does He say anything to mislead us. Every truth is stated in language we can understand if we have spiritually discerning minds (1 Corinthians 2:11-16).

Each of the six days is said also to have included the morning. The morning, or beginning of the day or light, is mentioned secondly to signify accurately the spiritual order God has established (1 Corinthians 15:46).

The period called day begins with darkness, but it ends with light. There is darkness in the day, but the day is not all dark. What a comforting message this is for all believers! "*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous*" (Psalm 112:4).

The days of Genesis 1 did not differ from one another or any day of modern times in length. If language can be trusted at all, then all six of these days were approximately twenty-fours long, as was the seventh day first mentioned in Genesis 2:2. If these days were ages, then there would be serious problem to solve: all plant life was created on the third day (Genesis 1:11-13) and requires alternating periods of light and darkness in which to grow and flourish. If the days were ages, then the night or darkness as well as the light or day would have been extremely long, prohibiting the survival of any plant life. However, when the days are understood of twenty-four hour periods, all plant life survived just fine as it does to this very day.

God Numbered These Days One Through Seven (Genesis 1:5-2:3)

The Hebrew word *yom* is translated 1181 times as day; 67 times as times, 30 times as today, 18 times as forever, 10 times as continually, 6 times as ages, 4 times as life, and 2 times as perpetually.

Day is used figuratively of an indefinite period of time. Isaiah 2:20 uses the word day in this sense: "*In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.*" In this usage, no specific day is intended. *Yom* sometimes means time itself, as in Genesis 4:3, "*And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.*" In Numbers 20:15, *yom* is used of a long period of time: "*How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have*

dwelt in Egypt a long time. . ." Finally, in Genesis 2:4, *yom* denotes a comprehensive or inclusive period of time: "*These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.*"

When a definite cardinal or ordinal number accompanies the word *yom* or day, a twenty-four hour period is meant without exception. There is a definite cardinal number with each of the days of creation: day one, day two, etc. Cf. Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31 (ordinal numbers are used in the A.V., but the Hebrew text uses cardinal numbers).

Other examples of the Hebrew word *yom* or day being used with a cardinal number restricting it to a twenty-four period of time are found in Genesis 27:45, ". . .*why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?*" Would anyone affirm one day in this passage is an indefinite period of time? 2 Samuel 1:1 is another example: "*Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag.*" No credible Bible scholar would argue these two days differed from two of our days or forty-eight hours. One more example will suffice: Exodus 5:3 contains Moses' request of Pharaoh that he let Israel go three days' journey into the desert to sacrifice unto the Lord. To interpret these three days as three unspecified periods of time would be to miss the obvious meaning of the text and do great injustice to the literal interpretation of Scripture. Any day defined by a cardinal number is never to be interpreted figuratively but literally of a twenty-four hour period of time.

In many passages of the Old Testament, the word *yom* or day is accompanied by an ordinal number which restricts that day to an ordinary twenty-four hour day. I cite three examples. The phrase first day is used in Leviticus 23:7 thusly: "*In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.*"

That the first day of the feast of unleavened bread was twenty-four hours long, no reasonable person would deny. Since this feast lasted seven days every year, it is obvious the length of the days were always the same or twenty-four hours. Exodus 2: 13 speaks of the second day that Moses went out to visit his brethren. Would anyone dare suggest this second day was anything other than a twenty-four hour period corresponding to what we still call a day in 2009? That my thesis might be verified by three witnesses, I cite Genesis 22: 4, "*Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off*" Did Abraham see Mount Moriah on the third day of his journey or did he have to wait until a third indefinite period of time to see it? When used with ordinal numbers, the word day is always limited to a literal twenty-four period of time.

God Sanctified the Seventh Day (Genesis 2:3)

What the first six days were in length, so was the seventh. If the first six days were ages, we are faced with a real problem regarding the seventh day because it is always considered a solar day of approximately twenty-four hours in duration. "*And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made*" (Genesis 2:3). Obviously, God did not need to rest from His creative work because He was tired; He rested in the sense that He ceased His work on the seventh day. The Hebrew word *shaveth* translated rested in Genesis 2:3 is translated ceased in many Old Testament passages such as Isaiah 14:4; 24:8; Lamentations 5:14-15. His sanctifying or setting apart the seventh day was for man's benefit. This day was called the *shabbath* or *sabbath* because it was to be a day of rest and worship for man. Leviticus 23:3 declares "*Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.*" Very obviously, it was one day of a week, not an age, that was set aside as a time of rest.

When the sabbath was instituted in the Mosaic Law, it was not something new; it had already been observed by Israel before being commanded in the Ten Commandments. Cf. Exodus 16:22-31. The six days in which Israel would gather the manna God had given them were very clearly six literal days, twenty-four hours in duration. The seventh or sabbath day was of the same length. If it were not, then the people, after eating for six indefinite periods of time, would have not had any food to gather for another unspecified period which could have been for thousands of years, for if the days of Genesis 1 & 2 were not literal days, who is to say the days of Exodus 16:22-31 were literal days? That the days of both of these passages were of the same length is evident from Jehovah's statements in Exodus 20:8-11. Exodus 20:11 connects this entire passage with creation thusly: *"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."*

If one is consistent in his interpretation of Scripture and makes the days of Genesis 1 geological periods, then he must make the seventh or sabbath day to be the same. If this were the case, would we not be in the seventh or sabbath age now? But since God rests from His work in the seventh day or age, we would not expect to find Him doing any work therein. Yet Jesus proclaimed, ". . . My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). Again, He said, ". . . My meat [food] is to do the will of him that sent, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). These words nullify any interpretation that would make the seventh day a geological age, because man would have had to be living in that age from Adam to the present day. That being the case, God the Father would be resting, not working. Yet our Lord Jesus said the Father had worked to the time He came into this world, and that He Himself was sent to finish the Father's work. To make the days of creation anything more than literal days of twenty-four hours length is to create all kinds of problems for common-sense and consistent Bible interpretation.

God Did Not Need Six Days to Make the Heaven and Earth, Much less thousands of Millions of Years

He spoke and it was done (Psalm 33:9). He used six literal days to establish a pattern and order for man whom He has commanded to work six days (Exodus 34:21). He rested on the seventh day to teach man to do the same, thus establishing the seven-day week, a measure of time used by man to this very day. No precise pattern could thus be given to man, if the days of Genesis 1 had been geological ages. Therefore, we believe the seven days of Genesis 1 & 2 were and had to have been literal days of twenty-four hours duration.