



“The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1)

REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

JANUARY 2008

What’s Happening?

Chapter Meeting

The next Seattle Chapter meeting will be held Saturday, February 9, 9:00 A.M at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Shoreline. David Marshall of Christ the Tao Ministry, will speak on his outreach ministry and his new book on worldview apologetics. For driving directions, go to www.calvinpc.org. Join us!

Apologetics Training

One of the goals of the Seattle Chapter is to increase the number RTB-trained apologists in the Puget Sound area. For a limited time, we are offering a 50 percent discount on the Reasons Institute online apologetics training course. To view the training, go to the RTB website, click on the Reasons Institute icon on the bottom of the page, then click on course descriptions. The training consists of “Creation and the Bible” (I-0401) and Creation vs. Evolution (I-0404). Normally \$110 each, you can now do them for only \$55 each. If you’re interested, contact the Seattle Chapter at seattle@reasons.org ASAP.

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The Days of Creation: A Closer Look at Scripture

JON W. GREENE

Though differences of opinion exist for various doctrinal issues within Christianity, few are more divisive than controversies surrounding the days of creation and the age of the Earth. For Christians who hold the young-earth view, being true to God’s word necessitates believing the universe, Earth, and life were all created in six 24-hour days, six to ten thousand years ago. This is based on the contention that the “simplest explanation of the [Genesis 1] text . . . is that Moses intended the days to be thought of in the most common sense of that term.”¹ Thus, any interpretation that goes beyond a clear plain meaning of the text is considered to compromise Biblical authority and capitulate to evolutionary theories.

One difficulty with this view is most young earth creationists interpret the Genesis creation account through the lens of the modern English Bible. While English translations can make it sound as though the creation days were 24-hour periods, textual and grammatical elements of the original Hebrew narrative suggest otherwise. Indeed, a literal reading of the Hebrew text provides compelling exegetical clues pointing to prolonged creation days. To understand why this is the case, one only needs to consider the chain of translation. From original Hebrew, the text was translated to the Greek Septuagint, to Latin Vulgate, to English Wycliffe, to English Tyndale, to the King James Version, and finally to the NIV, NASB, ESV and other modern translations. Because every language is unique, nuances of the original text have been lost in the translations leading to the modern English Bible.



The purpose of this paper is to delve deeper into the “days” of creation. This is not an attempt to denigrate the young-earth view, but to follow Paul’s admonition to “test everything and hold fast to what is good” (1 Thess. 5:21). Like Jerry E. White, President of The Navigators, states: “I do not condemn those who prefer a young-earth interpretation of Genesis, just as I would not condemn those who see an old-earth solution in the data.”² Both young-earth (calendar-day) creationists and old-earth (day-age) creationists consider the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God. Both believe the Genesis creation account is an historical narrative—not an allegory, myth, legend, or poetic expression. And both support an *ex nihilo* creation and reject Darwinian evo-

lution. Thus, both views come from believers who are merely seeking truth and trying to understand God's message in Genesis 1.

The problem lies in our external witness. Many unbelievers hold a naturalistic world-view because they cannot reconcile the Bible with science. One of the best ways to engage these skeptics is to use science apologetics to demonstrate the agreement of science and Scripture. However, the insistence on a six-to-ten thousand year old Earth undermines this effort and prevents a large segment of society from taking the Bible seriously. Two Christian apologists state this problem well:

“When the ‘young earth’ creationist insists that the biblical evidence indicates an earth only six to ten thousand years old, all communication bridges to the secular science community break down. The communication gap widens and such reactionary creationist views are labeled as ‘folk science.’ The scriptures and the gospel are consequently dismissed as meaningless.”⁴

And,

“Many non-Christians are driven away from the God of the Bible by the young-earth claims which are, frankly, ridiculous to most people who love science. It is a shame that people who love science, who would like to know the One who created the universe, reject, out of hand the Christian God, because they see Christianity as so unscientific.”⁵

For this reason, it is important we closely examine the controversy surrounding the creation “days.” In this paper, we will look at this issue from three perspectives: (1) a brief historical overview of creationist beliefs regarding the creation days, (2) a review of the creation days with an emphasis on the textual and grammatical elements of the original Hebrew text, and (3) a discussion of the “death before the Fall” issue.

BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The prevailing view in the 17th century was the days of creation were 24-hour periods and the creation was approximately 6,000 years old. This 6,000 year time-frame was based on compilations of the Genesis genealogies done by Archbishop James Ussher and theologian John Lightfoot around A.D. 1650. Based on the ages of patriarchs in the genealogies, both Ussher and Lightfoot concluded the universe, earth and life were created in 4004 B.C.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, new data from geology and paleontology established the earth was millions of years old, which conflicted greatly with Ussher and Lightfoot. In 1857, Philip Gosse (1810-1888), a British preacher and self-trained biologist, proposed a solution to this dilemma. Because Gosse felt obligated to uphold Ussher's 4004 B.C. creation date, he proposed God had created the world with the “appearance of age”—although the creation *appeared* to be ancient, it was actually only 6,000 years old.⁶ For instance, Gosse argued trees were created with growth rings in place, coral reefs were created fully-developed, and rocks were created with fossils in them.⁷ Although Gosse's theory was rejected during his lifetime, some young-earth creationists continue to promote the “appearance of age” view, most notably in the area of astronomy.⁸

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Professor William Henry Green (1825-1900) and distinguished theologian Benjamin B. Warfield (1851-1921) noted gaps and omissions in the Genesis genealogies. This suggested the creation was substantially older

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In the NEWS...

[Staying Power](#)

This Discovery Institute linked article by Logan Paul Gage examines the claim made by many atheists that “religion poisons everything.” Using data from the General Social Survey (GSS), Gage demonstrates religious people are more altruistic and less likely to engage in unethical behavior. Go to: <http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=4393&program=CSC%20-%20Views%20and%20News>.

[Jesus in Turkey](#)

This *Christianity Today* article discusses how Christianity is growing in numbers and influence in Turkey for the first time in 550 years. It also describes the challenges Christians face in a country that is 98 percent Muslim. Go to <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/january/12.25.html>.

[Choosin' My Religion](#)

This article by J.P. Moreland on the Focus on the Family website lays out four principles people should follow in choosing what religion they will follow. If the four principles are properly applied, they point to Christianity as the rational choice. Go to: <http://www.family.org/faith/A000000724.cfm>.

[The Mormon Question](#)

This Breakpoint article by Stephen Reed examines the issue of whether Christians are right to consider the Latter-day Saints church a cult. Reed concludes Mormonism is not “just like Christianity” but something wholly different whether one calls it a “cult” or simply “unorthodox.” Go to: <http://www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=7430>.

[Overcoming Anger and Fear](#)

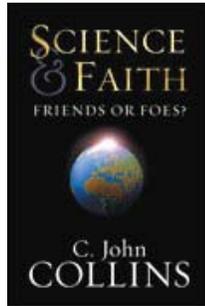
In this article posted on beliefnet, Billy Graham shares practical steps for dealing with destructive emotions. Graham's advice? We can overcome with them God's help by seeking His forgiveness, asking for His help, trusting His promises and taking practical steps to deal with them. Go to: http://www.beliefnet.com/story/188/story_18810.html.

Book Reviews

Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?

C. John Collins
Crossway Books, 2003

Reviewer: John Battle



As an Old Testament scholar and professor at Covenant Theological Seminary, and as a scientist educated at M.I.T., Collins is able to combine his areas of expertise and present a case for an interpretation of the Bible and its doctrines that is at once faithful both to the Hebrew original, including the doctrinal setting of the OT, and to the latest discoveries of modern mainline science. Collins does this by favoring the “analogical day” view of Genesis 1.

In addition to the time of creation controversy, Collins deals with other issues where science and theology intersect. He favors a “realist” philosophy, according to which we are able to observe the actual universe, and are able to make true inductions from what we observe. He provides an excellent treatment of the doctrine of humanity, including an extensive discussion of the relation of the soul to the body, the mind and the spirit to the brain, and related topics. He discusses the effects of our fall into sin to the “curse” on the earth, and relates it to the promised new heavens and new earth. Collins also offers help in relating Christian theology to the questions of God’s providence in the world, to methods of apologetics, and to our relation to the environment. His discussion of the Intelligent Design movement is up-to-date and sensible.

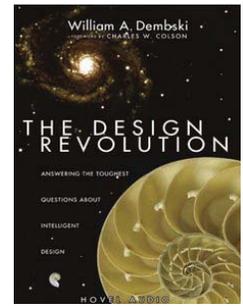
Especially helpful are the extensive notes, unfortunately placed at the end of the book. These notes provide documentation, and interesting expansions of the discussion in the text. Particularly interesting is the full text of the letter by the linguist James Barr, a letter often quoted by recent creationists; this letter does not support the idea of a recent creation in the Bible to the extent touted by recent creationists.

I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in studying the relationship of modern science to the Bible and the Christian faith.

The Design Revolution

William A. Dembski
Intervarsity, 2004

Reviewer: Pat Lewis



Bewildered students, take heart! Here finally we have a user-friendly reference book on Intelligent Design that can enable us to understand and discuss all aspects of the subject. Bill Dembski, whose awesome erudition as displayed in some of his earlier books has left ordinary folks despairing of ever following his thought, has come through with a lucid question-and-answer manual that plainly unpacks the Design argument for us.

The book is organized under six major themes: Basic Distinctions, Detecting Design, Information, Issues Arising from Naturalism, Theoretical Challenges to Intelligent Design, and A New Kind of Science. Chapters under each section are introduced by questions which Dembski then answers with logic and skill that have been polished in his lecture sessions at colleges and universities all over the country.

Intelligent Design can be studied by scientific methods just as well as other theories—Darwinism, for one. “Darwinism, conceived as a theory about how biological complexity has emerged in the history of life, is a scientific theory. Intelligent Design, conceived as a theory about the inherent limitations of undirected natural causes to generate biological complexity...is likewise a scientific theory.”

Questions arise about the Designer. At RTB we would like to understand and identify the Designer as the God of the Bible. But this means branching into theology and philosophy, and this does not suit Dembski’s purpose. “In place of understanding we must content ourselves with knowledge. We do not understand how quantum mechanics works, but we know that it works. So too, we may not understand how an unembodied designer imparts specified complexity into the world, but we can know that such a designer imparts specified complexity into the world.”

Students, apologists, get your hands on this book. You’ll be glad you did!

than the 6,000-year timeframe Ussher and Lightfoot had proposed. Today, many Bible scholars hold this view and believe the early Hebrew genealogies provide highlights, but not a complete rendering of each and every actual generation.⁹ For example, in his expositional commentary on Genesis, James Montgomery Boice states:

“It has been pointed out by biblical scholars, among them no less a scholar than Princeton’s B.B. Warfield, that the biblical genealogies are not necessarily all-inclusive when they list a series of descendants . . . they may (and in fact do) leave gaps, so that a person identified as a ‘son’ of a person coming before him in the list need not necessarily be a literal son but may be a grandson or great-grandson. Moreover, the gaps may sometimes be quite large . . .”¹⁰

In the mid-20th century, young-earth creationism was rekindled by publications promoting flood geology, creation science, and scientific creationism.¹¹ The chief architect of flood geology was George McCready Price (1870-1963), a Seventh Day Adventist who insisted the Flood was responsible for the Earth’s geological features.¹² Self-taught and lacking a formal education in geology, Price based flood geology on the teachings of his mentor, Ellen G. White (1827-1915), prophetess and founder of the Seventh Day Adventist movement. In numerous trance-like visions, White claimed she was “carried back to the creation” and “Noah’s flood had sculpted the surface of the earth, burying the plants and animals found in the fossil record.”¹³ It is startling White’s “divine messages” became so influential in 21st century Christianity.

In the 1960s, “flood geology” was co-opted by John Whitcomb’s and Henry Morris’ book, *The Genesis Flood*, published in 1961. Like Price, neither Whitcomb nor Morris had degrees in geology. Although the book was extremely popular, many geologists were critical of the scholarship.¹⁴ The following statement by Christian geologist W.U. Ault is typical of the criticism the book received:

“The writings of these non-geologists [Price, Whitcomb, Morris] exhibit a basic lack of understanding of even the fundamental principles of geology . . . a number of basic points completely invalidate flood geology . . . The serious Bible student will not seek to support the physical aspects of Bible history with pseudoscience.”¹⁵

Despite the scientific shortcomings of *The Genesis Flood*, Whitcomb and Morris aggressively promoted the book, crisscrossing the country, speaking most often at Baptist churches, but also conservative Presbyterian, Lutheran, Reformed, and Pentecostal churches. They also spoke at Biola University, Bob Jones University, Dallas Theological Seminary and other seminaries and Bible colleges, spreading the “gospel of flood geology.”¹⁶ Today, many Christians accept the Whitcomb/Morris model ignoring, or unaware of, its scientific problems. That is the reason many pastors today still fallaciously preach “flood geology” is the reason “seashells are found on mountaintops.”¹⁷

Young-earth creationists often quote a 1984 letter from James Barr,

Hebrew scholar from Oxford, to support their view. In the letter, Barr states he knows of “no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university” who does not believe that Genesis 1 conveys the “creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience.”¹⁸ However, the statement is taken out of context. In the letter, Barr clarifies “it’s really not so much a matter of technical linguistic competence, as an appreciation of the sort of text that Genesis is.” Yet, the reason young-earth creationists cite the letter is to demonstrate the 24-hour day view is a matter of technical linguistic competence.¹⁹

The old-earth (day-age) view has many advocates. A two-year study by the conservative PCA Creation Study Committee provides an excellent overview some of the supporters:

“In the 19th century, before Darwin’s 1859 *Origin of Species* and in the midst of much discussion of a geological basis for an ‘old earth,’ Robert Shaw described favorably the possibility of interpreting the days of creation as ages. Professor Taylor Lewis of the Reformed Church of America advocated long ages . . . as did Donald MacDonald, a minister of the Free Church of Scotland . . . Princeton theologians, Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield supported a Day-Age approach, as did also J. Gresham Machen, O.T. Allis, and E.J. Young of Westminster Seminary. . . . J. Oliver Buswell, Jr. . . . R. Laird Harris and Francis Schaeffer. In his three-volume *Commentary on Genesis*, James Montgomery Boice . . . concludes by favoring a Day-Age view.”²⁰

Other Christian leaders who are/were open to the old-earth view include: John Ankerberg, Walter Kaiser, William Lane Craig, Norman Geisler, J.P. Moreland, Chuck Colson, Paul Copan, Greg Koukl, C.S. Lewis, Hugh Ross, and Lee Strobel.²¹ The following comments represent the views of many conservative Bible scholars and theologians:

“Anyone who is at all familiar with the Bible and the way the Bible uses words, knows that the use of the word ‘day’ is not limited to twenty-four hours. It is frequently used to denote a period of entirely undefined length . . . There is no necessity whatsoever for interpreting the days of Genesis 1 as solar days of twenty-four hours length.”²² – R.A. Torrey (1856-1928), founder of Talbot Seminary and editor of *The Fundamentals*.

“It is certainly not necessary to think that the six days spoken of in that first chapter of the Bible are intended to be six days of twenty four hours each. We may think of them rather as very long periods of time.”²³ – J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937), considered the last of the great orthodox Princeton theologians.

“But then there arises the question as the length of these days. That is a question which is difficult to answer. Indications are not lacking that they may have been longer than the days we now know, but the Scripture itself does not speak as clearly as one might like.”²⁴ – Edward J. Young (1907-1968), regarded as “the epitome of conservative exegetical orthodoxy.”

And,

“[Young earth] creationists insist that the days cover a literal 24 hours, but this is not necessarily the case. Sometimes the word ‘day’ is used with a broader meaning . . . it can mean a period of indefinite duration.”²⁵ “Any view that makes the earth 12 to 20 thousand years old flies in the face of too much varied and independent evidence to be tenable. In my judgment the earth and universe are indeed billions of years old.”²⁶ – James Montgomery Boice, chairman of the International Council of Biblical Inerrancy.

THE CREATION “DAYS”

Martin Luther once said, “If I were younger, I would want to learn this language [Hebrew], for without it one can never properly understand the Holy Scripture . . . For that reason they have said correctly: ‘The Jews drink out of the original spring, the Greeks drink out of the stream flowing out of the stream, the Latins, however, out of the puddle.’”²⁷ We can only wonder how Luther would characterize those of us who read the Scriptures in modern English.

The debate over the creation days is not about the inspiration of the Bible, or a “literal” vs. “figurative” view of Scripture. Both young-earth and old-earth creationists believe the Bible is inspired and defend their interpretations as being *literal*. The issue is the *interpretation* of the text of Genesis 1.²⁸ According to Bruce Waltke, the young-earth exegesis is hindered by an adherence to a “woodenly literal” reading of Genesis.²⁹ Gordon Wenham concurs, stating the problem is “six days has been seized on and interpreted over-literally, with the result that science and Scripture have been pitted against each other instead of being seen as complementary.”³⁰

Does the Bible demand that we interpret the creation days as 24-hour time periods? To answer this question, I will compare the young-earth and old-earth views of each of the creation “days,” followed by a brief summary of exegetical support for the old-earth view.

Day One: Light

The opening narrative of Genesis 1 states:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. . . . And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. . . . And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. (Gen. 1:1-5)

Young-Earth View

Young-earth creationists claim Genesis 1:1 (*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*) is a summary statement of the work God performed during the creation week. They believe God created the Earth, mature and fully-formed, on the first day.³¹ According to their view, Earth was alone, suspended in the heavens and the Sun, Moon and stars were created on the fourth day. Thus, the light God made came

from a source other than the Sun.

Old-Earth View

Old-earth creationists claim Genesis 1:1 describes God’s creation of the universe (*ex nihilo*) through the “big bang” event, by which God created all matter and energy and ultimately all heavenly bodies including the Earth, Sun, Moon and stars. According to this view, the narrative shifts forward in time and changes from a cosmic perspective to an earthly one in Genesis 1:2 (the Earth was void and dark). At that point, God caused sunlight to penetrate the darkness and illuminate the Earth.

Exegetical Support

1) The Heavens and the Earth

The verbs used in Genesis 1:1-2 (i.e., God *created* and earth *was*) are in the *perfect* tense³² and distinct from the *wayyiqtol* verb form used in the remainder of Genesis 1. As Hebrew linguist C. John Collins³³ notes, the *wayyiqtol* verb functions as “the backbone or storyline tense of Biblical Hebrew narrative discourse,”³⁴ while the *perfect* verb “denotes an event that took place before the main storyline got underway.”³⁵ Thus, the verb forms indicate the creation of “the heavens and the Earth” was separate from, and preceded, the events of the first creation day.

The Hebrew phrase “the heavens and the earth” (*hashamayim we ha ‘erets*) is known as a merism, where words coupled together have a different meaning than the individual words. *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* defines *hashamayim we ha ‘erets* as “all the raw materials needed to make sun, planets, stars, nebulae, galaxies, molecules, atoms.”³⁶ Similarly, Vine and Grudem each equate *hashamayim we ha ‘erets* with “the entire universe” and “entire creation.”³⁷ This further supports the old-earth view that the entire universe—including the Earth, Sun, Moon, and stars—were created prior to the first creation day.

2) Creation from Nothing (*ex nihilo*)

Many young-earth creationists disavow the “big bang” as being strictly naturalistic science. However, it is important to consider the following statement by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (Summit II, 1982) on the relationship of science and Scripture:

“It is sometimes argued that our exegesis should not be influenced by scientific observations. We believe this view is mistaken. While the Bible clearly gives more specific information about our relationship to God than one can possibly deduce from natural revelation, it does not necessarily follow that our understanding of the physical world, its origin, etc., will also be more clearly deduced from God’s revelation in His word than His revelation in His world. Since both are revelations from God, and therefore, give a unified story, it seems quite permissible to consider all of the evidence (scientific as well as biblical) to be significant to the degree that each revelation can be clearly interpreted.”³⁸

The young-earth rejection of the big bang model parallels the Galileo

controversy in the 1500s. Galileo observed the earth revolved around the sun, which conflicted with the Catholic Church's interpretation of Psalm 93:1 (the earth being unmovable) and Ecclesiastes 1:4-5 (the sun appearing to revolve around earth). Through scientific observation the meaning of Scripture was eventually brought into clearer focus. As respected Christian philosopher William Lane Craig states, "The Big Bang model ...dramatically and unexpectedly [supports] the biblical doctrine of creation ex nihilo."³⁹

3) Let There be Light

Young-earth creationists interpret Genesis 1:3 ("And God said, 'Let there be light'") to mean God created light that instant. This is because English has a punctiliar aspect, which means the reader views the action as taking place at a single point in time.⁴⁰ However, the Hebrew verb for "be" (*hayah*) means "to be" or "to exist." As Collins notes, the verbs in Genesis 1:3 (Let there *be* . . . and there *was*) do not imply the creation of light, or a sense of coming into existence.⁴¹ This supports the view that the illumination came from pre-existing light—the sun. There is no exegetical justification for the young-earth hypothesis that the light came from a non-solar source God created.

Old-earth creationists use Job 38 to explain the events of the first creation day. Job tells us, when God "laid the foundation of the earth," He "made clouds its garment and thick clouds its swaddling band" (Job 38:4,9 ESV).⁴² Based on this, old-earth creationists maintain the Earth was initially dark because it was surrounded by a dense, opaque atmosphere. Then, in Genesis 1:3, God caused the thick cloud cover to thin, allowing sun-light to reach the Earth's surface for the first time.

4) Day (*yôm*) with a Number

Hebrew scholars acknowledge the word translated "day" (*yôm*) has several literal meanings: daylight, day, time, moment, or long era of time. The question is which definition of *yôm* did the Genesis author intend? Biblical Hebrew has a very limited vocabulary—approximately 3,100 words compared to over 4,000,000 English words.⁴³ In English, we have many words that can be used to describe a long period of time. However, biblical Hebrew has no word other than *yôm* to denote a long time-span.⁴⁴

Some claim *yôm* attached to a number (i.e., ordinal, "first, second, third," etc) requires a 24-hour-day interpretation. However, Bible scholars dispute that. For example, noted Hebrew scholar Gleason L. Archer states the ordinal simply defines a symbolic unit of time and "serves as no real evidence for a literal 24-hour day concept on the part of the Biblical author." Archer also points out that the days of creation do not bear a definite article in Hebrew (i.e., "the first day," "the second day," etc.). He states, "In Hebrew prose of this genre, the definite article was generally used where the noun was intended to be definite . . . Thus they [the days of creation] are well adapted to a sequential pattern, rather than to strictly delimited units of time."⁴⁵

It should also be noted that there are instances in Scripture where *yôm*

used with a number does not restrict its meaning to 24 hours. For example, Hosea 6:2 states: "He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day," referring to Israel's ultimate restoration some hundreds or thousands of years in the future. Zechariah 14:7, describing the Day of the Lord, contains *yôm echad* (translated "unique day"), which is identical to *yôm echad* of Genesis 1:5 (translated "one day"). The context of Zechariah 14:7-8 suggests *yôm echad* will be a period of time spanning at least one summer and one winter, obviously longer than a 24-hour day.

5) Evening and Morning

Young-earth creationists claim "day" (*yôm*) accompanied by the phrase "and there was evening and there was morning" indicates the creation days were normal 24-hour days. However, there is lack of unanimity on this point. For example, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* states "These are not ordinary days bounded by minutes and hours, but days of God . . . The beginning of each act of creation is called morning, and the close of that specific divine act is called evening."⁴⁶

In biblical Hebrew, "evening" (*ereb*) has several meanings, including "sunset," "night," or "at the turn of evening"⁴⁷ and conveys a "sense of gradual cessation or diminishing of activity."⁴⁸ "Morning" (*boqer*) also has several meanings, including "the point of time at which night is changing to day . . . the end of night, daybreak, dawn"⁴⁹ or "beginning of day"⁵⁰ and conveys a sense of a "new starting of creative activity."⁵¹ Thus, neither term restricts the meaning of "day" to a 24-hour period.

Much of the confusion comes from the King James Version, which combines evening and morning together—"And the evening and the morning were the *nth* day." As Collins notes, "Grammatically, the AV [Authorized King James Version] compresses the two events into a sum, namely, the evening plus the morning were a day."⁵² This is incorrect. A more accurate translation is found in the NASB and ESV: "And there was evening and there was morning, the *nth* day." Note the time period from "evening" to "morning" brackets only the night. As Collins states: "This means that any effort to find this as defining [24-hour] days runs counter to the author's [Moses] own presentation."⁵³

That "evening and morning" can be used to represent long periods of time is evident in Psalm 90, which is attributed to Moses, the writer of Genesis. In the Psalm, "morning" defines the beginning of life and "evening" the end of life. Thus, "morning and evening" brackets the entire human lifespan. As Gleason Archer states, "Concerning the recurring [evening and morning] formula at the end of each creative day . . . there were definite and distinct stages in God's creational procedure . . . it serves as no real evidence for a literal twenty-four-hour day concept on the part of the biblical author."⁵⁴

According to Professor Nathan Aviezer of Bar-Ilan University in Israel, this is consistent with the way early Talmud scholars approached Genesis 1. He states, "A statement must be made at the outset about biblical chronology of the six days of creation. Any attempt to correlate the biblical text with scientific knowledge must necessarily understand

the term 'day' to mean a phase or a period in the development of the world, rather than a time interval of twenty-four hours. . . ."⁵⁵

Day Two: Sky and Waters

The narrative of the second day states:

And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the expanse and separated the waters . . . And it was so. (Gen. 1:6-8)

Young-Earth View

Young-Earth creationists contend this passage states that God created atmosphere and separated the heavenly waters from terrestrial waters during a normal 24-hour day.

Old-Earth View

The old-earth view is similar, except the events take place over an extended period of time, during which God established a stable atmosphere and water cycle.

Exegetical Support

The English translation, "*And God said . . . And it was so*" imparts a sense of immediacy. However, the phrase translated "and it came to pass" or "and it was so" is a *waw-consecutive* form of the imperfect verb "to be," which signifies a completed action. As Whitefield points out, this indicates the commands have been completed and does not imply the action was completed immediately.⁵⁶ Thus, although God commanded the establishment of an atmosphere and water cycle, there is no textual requirement it occurred within a 24-hour period.

Day Three: Plants

The narrative of the third day states:

And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." . . . And the earth brought forth vegetation . . . plants . . . and trees. (Gen. 1:9-13)

Young-Earth View

Young-earth creationists contend God caused dry land to appear and then created mature forms of all the plant life on the Earth—all within a 24-hour period. John MacArthur expresses this viewpoint succinctly: "There is no doubt beautiful waterfalls and canyons and other features . . . were all made in one day. . . . Vegetation of every kind appeared instantly at His word . . . He created fully mature vegetation with seed already in it, ready to be dispersed . . . God created plants, not merely seeds."⁵⁷ According to their view, the light necessary for plant life came from a non-solar source, because the sun wasn't created "day" four.

Old-Earth View

Old-earth creationists believe God caused dry land to emerge from the water-covered earth over eons of time through plate-tectonics and other

geological processes. Then, once the conditions were right, God caused plants to sprout, grow, and develop "after their kinds."⁵⁸ According to their view, different generations of plants appeared over time according to God's timetable—each perfectly matched to the environment and the increasing sunlight as the atmosphere continued to gradually clear.

Exegetical Support

The text does not say God created (*bara*) mature plants. The command is in the *Hiphil* verb form, indicating the land was to be the agent causing the sprouting. The Hebrew "brought forth" (*yatsa*) is a completed action (i.e., imperfect verb with a "*waw*" prefix). This indicates the plants germinated from seeds and grew into mature plants, a process requiring months or years. Some young-earth creationists claim God caused plants to grow supernaturally fast, so that they sprouted and bore fruit in 24 hours. However, that would require that we interpret the words differently than their usual Hebrew meanings and there is no textual evidence to support that assertion.⁵⁹

Genesis 2:8-9 also speaks of the third creation day. It states: "*And the LORD God planted a garden . . . And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow [tsamach] every tree . . .*" *Tsamach* means to "sprout or grow," natural processes requiring more than 24 hours to produce a mature tree. Although God caused plants to appear on the Earth and governed the growth processes (i.e., germination, sprouting, seed-production and fruit-bearing), compressing the events of the third day into a 24-hour time period distorts the Hebrew word meanings of both Genesis 1:11-12 and Genesis 2:8-9.

[End of Part 1. Part 2 will appear in February.]

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3. The "gap theory", "intermittent days view," and "framework view" are other old-earth interpretations which are rejected by this writer.
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7. Philip Henry Gosse, *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot*, (London: John VanWoorst, 1857), vii, referenced in www.robibrad.demon.co.uk/chapter3_pf.htm.
8. Some young-earth creationists claim God created light from distant stars "in transit," thereby only giving the universe the "appearance

- of age.” However, if God did that, then He had to create deceptive history and events that never occurred, an example being Supernova 1987A. Light from Supernova 1987A, which was 168,000 light-years from earth, reached earth in 1987. If the exploding star never actually existed and God only created the light in-transit, that suggests deception on the part of God, which goes against Romans 1:20.
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 13. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts: Important Facts of Faith in Connection with the History of Holy Men of Old*, (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), cited in Numbers, 73-74; “George McCready Price and Flood Geology,” www.meta-library/net/history/floodgeo-body.html.
 14. Numbers, 205.
 15. W.A. Ault, “Flood (Genesis),” *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Volume 2, Merrill C. Tenney, General Editor, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 561-563.
 16. Numbers, 209-210.
 17. Ancient seas once covered the earth. Due to geologic processes involving plate tectonics and mountain-building, the ancient sea beds were gradually thrust upward, resulting in seashells and fossilized sea life being found in all sedimentary layers, including mountain tops. The geologic column, comprised of distinctly separated layers of sandstone, shale, limestone, volcanic ash, etc, contains fossilized remains of dead animals AND evidence of living animals. Fossilized footprints of living animals are sandwiched in between layers containing dead animals. Clearly a cataclysmic flood of short duration cannot account for such formations.
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 19. C. John Collins, *Science & Faith: Friends or Foes?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 364-366.
 20. “Report of the Creation Study Committee,” June 21, 2000, accessible on the internet at www.pcahistory.org/creation/report.html.
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 28. *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*, David G. Hagopian, Editor, (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux Press, Inc., 2001), 11.
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 30. Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Bible Commentary*, Volume 1, Genesis 1-15, (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1987), 39.
 31. Some young-earth creationists have adopted Russell Humphreys’ Starlight and Time model, a complex theory suggesting the heavens and earth were created at the same time using some sort of “white hole” cosmology. In this theory, 10 to 14 billion years of time elapsed as measured by a “clock” in the distant universe, while only 6,000 years of time elapsed as measured by clocks in the vicinity of earth. The discrepancy between the two clocks relates to the existence of an “event horizon” that propagates out of the center of the universe. There is no accepted scientific evidence for this model.
 32. Biblical Hebrew verb “tenses” do not express the time when an event happens, but merely the state of action. Verbs in biblical Hebrew only indicate complete finished action (perfect “tense”) or incomplete unfinished action (imperfect “tense”). A completed action may have been completed in the near past (and instant ago), the distant past (eons ago), or even the future. English translations of Hebrew verbs add “when” information that is not included in the original Hebrew meaning. For more information, read Rodney Whitefield, *Reading Genesis One: Comparing Biblical Hebrew with English Translation*, (San Jose, CA: Whitefield Publisher, 2004).
 33. C. John Collins is Professor of Old Testament, and department chair at Covenant Theological Seminary. He served as chairman of the Old Testament Committee for the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible and holds a PhD in Hebrew linguistics.
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 38. International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, Summit II (1982), quoted in *The Genesis Debate*, 73.
 39. W. L. Craig, www.arn.org/docs/odesign/od172/cosmos172.htm.
 40. W.D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 4, 19, cited in Rodney Whitefield, *Reading Genesis One: Comparing Biblical Hebrew with English Translation*, (San Jose, CA: Whitefield Publisher, 2004), 55.

41. Collins, 57.
42. Scientists agree with Job's description. In *Life As We Do Not Know It* (Viking: 2005, pp 27-30), author Peter Ward describes the early earth as follows: "... thick, roiling atmosphere of steam and carbon dioxide filled the skies ... planet-smothering cloud of water vapor ... the sun would appear much dimmer ... it had to shine through a poisonous, riled atmosphere composed of billowing carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, steam, and methane."
43. *The Genesis Debate*, 125.
44. Ibid, 148. Note: The Hebrew word 'olam is sometimes claimed to mean a long time period. However, Hebrew lexicons show that only in post-biblical writings did 'olam refer to a long age or epoch. In biblical times it meant "forever," "perpetual," "lasting," "always," or "the remote past."
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50. Ross, *A Matter of Days*, 73.
51. Whitefield, 68.
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53. Collins, 77.
54. Archer, 62.
55. Nathan Aviezer, *In the Beginning: Biblical Creation and Science*, (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1990), 1-2.
56. Whitefield, 72, 95.
57. John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning: Creation, Evolution, and the Bible*, (W. Publishing Group, 2001), 56, 98.
58. The information encoded within DNA, even in the most primitive plant life, is one of the strongest evidences for God. In either creationist view, the growth, metabolism, and reproduction of plants require information encoded within DNA. The genetic code, like any language or code, requires a pre-existing "programmer" or Intelligence. Science has no explanation for the complex specified information encoded within the DNA of living organisms.
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Seattle Chapter Reasons To Believe

Who Are We?

The Seattle Chapter of Reasons To Believe is a local extension of the worldwide, interdenominational Reasons To Believe ministry. We exist to support our parent organization and foster local involvement in the ministry. We serve the Puget Sound area and are composed of Christians of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction that the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, what God says through His word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinism and young-Earth creationism.

What Do We Do?

Our mission is to remove the doubts of skeptics and strengthen the faith of believers. We provide scientific, historical and philosophical evidence that supports the Christian worldview and helps remove barriers to a belief in God, the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission by:

- Helping people access RTB and other scientifically and biblically sound resources.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Assembling a team of local apologists to address questions about science, the Bible and related topics.
- Working with teachers and homeschoolers to achieve a balanced approach to the teaching of origins.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of the RTB ministry.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, encouraging them to evaluate their worldviews.

We welcome your involvement and support. For more information, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Seattle RTB, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683.

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