

Genesis 1

A Day is a Day is A Day of course: Unless that day challenges Darwinism!

Genesis has been a battleground for some time, and today is no different. This is particularly true of Genesis 1-3, which is the account of the creation and the fall. When I first began studying the Scripture, I recognized the importance of the first eleven chapters of Genesis but in retrospect I did not fully appreciate the magnitude of their significance. As I studied other areas of the Scripture and began learning the breadth and depth of God's revelation, I saw that without the truthfulness and perspicuity of the first eleven chapters of Genesis, every major theme of Scripture lay in jeopardy.

Probably the most hotly debated issue, at least among those who would claim any God honoring respect for the Scripture, is whether or not the days of Genesis 1 are lunar days or indefinite periods of time. In other words, did God create the world in 6 days or is the simple language of Genesis concealing a deeper esoteric meaning only fully revealed to scientists quite apart from the Scripture. Scientists like Hugh Ross accept the theory of evolution and seek to interpret Genesis through the prism of evolution. In doing so, they seem to undermine what is otherwise the clear teaching of Scripture.

The place to start is always the Scripture rather than psychology, sociology, evolution, etc. We should evaluate the teachings of man in light of the clear teachings of Scripture rather than seeking to harmonize the Scripture with modern theories about man, God and His world. I am not at all against learning from science, and/or other disciplines, but to interpret Scripture in light of them rather than through consistent and sound hermeneutics is to subjugate the Scripture to the whims of man.

Consequently, this article looks at the strengths of interpreting the word "day" in Genesis chapter 1 as a normal lunar day and answers objections to this normal reading of the text.

I Reasons for assuming that the word "day" in the six days of creation and one day of rest in Genesis 1 and 2 means normal days¹

1 1:5 is the first time the word day is used in the passage, and it is used in two different senses. The word actually defines itself in the second usage. "God called the light day, *yôm*,² and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day." (*Genesis 1:5*)

A The light portion in distinction from the dark portion of the cycle God calls day whereas the darkness He calls night. Of course this is common in both Scripture and modern English, and refers to the light portion of a *normal* day.

B He then defines the duration of day and night by the phrase "evening and...morning" as "one day". Consequently, one full day includes an evening

¹ For a full and scholarly handling of the Scripture, science, and objections to Genesis 1 referring to normal days, I recommend the books, "Refuting Compromise" by Jonathan Sarfati and "Did God Use Evolution" by Dr. Werner Gitt; or go to the websites of The Discovery Institute, <http://www.discovery.org/> and Answers in Genesis, <http://www.answersingenesis.org/>

² This is the Hebrew word for day

- and a morning (which is the transition between light and darkness of a day) which means a normal lunar day.³
- 2 “The two words, ‘evening’ and ‘morning’ are combined with *yôm* 19 times outside of Genesis 1. Every time, they clearly mean that particular literal part of a 24-hour day, regardless of the literary genre or context. Also, even when ‘morning’ and ‘evening’ occur together without *yôm* (38 times outside of Genesis 1), it always, without exception, designates a 24-hour day.”⁴
 - 3 Day, *yôm*, “whenever ...used with a number or the words *evening* or *morning*, it can mean only an ordinary day, never a long period of time.”⁵

The question must be asked, if God wanted to convey that He created the world in eons of time, through a long process of evolution, then why did He speak of creation in such a way that uses all of the normal devices and phrases that clearly picture it as happening in six lunar days? If Genesis contained just one characteristic of a week of real days, for example, the chronology of two partial days, or the word day without the word night, or no ordinals or cardinals, or no light before the first day, a partial rotation or ...it might seem plausible that we are stretching it to conclude that God meant real days; however, what we find is a cohesive picture of one week of creation and rest that is supported elsewhere in the Scripture; we find the use of cardinals, ordinals, night, day, evening, morning, rhythmic sequence, chronology, distinction between seasons, days and years v.14, sun for day and moon for night v.16—same words for day and night as previous verses just as one would expect if God meant it to mean real days, a real week, and real seasons. There are Hebrew words which clearly communicate long periods of time.⁶

Further, if the true identity of these words is indiscernible, where can one find certainty about anything else in Genesis? I mean if God communicates in such an obfuscatory manner here by employing words, terms and style that picture real days but actually mean eons of time—whatever is necessary to fit the present theory of time needed to support evolution’s ridiculous notion of time and chance equals everything—why not employ that same obfuscatory style elsewhere? For example, did God create man distinctly and uniquely, did man really sin, was there a garden to cultivate, was there a flood, law, redemption, crucifixion...or are all of these subjects of the same hazy nature as Genesis 1, therefore making Biblical language mean anything and everything and therefore really nothing?

³ The argument that the sun was not created until the fourth day; therefore, these could not be speaking of the normal lunar day cycle is without merit. God can and does make light without the sun (Revelation 21:23-24). In Genesis God created light v.3; in v.14 God institutes a new order via a secondary source for dispensing light. The only necessary requirements for having the day and night cycle is that the earth is rotating and light is coming from one direction.

⁴ Jonathan Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise: A Biblical and Scientific Refutation of “Progressive Creationism” (Billions of Years) As Popularized by Astronomer Hugh Ross* (Green Forest, AR.: Master Books, Inc., 2004), 81.

⁵ Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*, 67.

⁶ Sarfati, p327

- John MacArthur notes, "...their decision to accept the creation of Adam as literal involves an arbitrary hermeneutical shift at Genesis 1:26-27 and then again at Genesis 2:7. If everything around these verses is handled allegorically or symbolically, it is unjustifiable to take those verses in a literal and historical sense....Their belief in a historical Adam is simply inconsistent with their own exegesis of the rest of the text."⁷
- 4 "When modified by a cardinal number (for example, one, two, three...) or ordinal number (for example, first, second, third...) as used 359 times in the Old Testament outside Genesis 1, *yôm* always means a literal day of about 24 hours, or the light portion of the day-night cycle....In particular, in 189 occurrences, a cardinal number with day (usually the plural *yamim*) denotes a specific duration of time."⁸ This fact stands in stark contrast to the supposed indefinite period of time proposed by the day-age theorists.
 - 5 Genesis 1 pattern: the first day is called "day one", the others say "first day", "second day"...and day 2 through 5 also lack a definite article; then days 6 and 7 have an article before the numbers. Consequently chapter 1 reads like this: day one, a second day, a third day, a fourth day, a fifth day, the sixth day, and the seventh day.
 - A This pattern allowed the text to define the meaning of "day" in this context (vs. 5).
 - B The normal meaning of the passage, without the intrusion of evolutionary postulates and necessities, lends itself to being read as normal day; hence, it is not the language employed or context that precludes these from being normal days but rather a prior commitment to the sufficiency of the theory of macroevolution and/or science of the day.
 - 6 *Yôm* appears 2300 times in the Old Testament, 1450 in the singular, 845 in the plural and five in the dual form (two days).⁹ The normal way it is used is to mean a normal 24 hour day or a part of a normal day; thus, it seems quite clear that one should at least be inclined to use it in its normal way unless the biblical context is preclusive of such an understanding, which Genesis is not.
 - 7 Context should determine the meaning of a word rather than superimposing an exceptional meaning, or defining it by what the word *can* or does mean *at times* in *different contexts*. D.A. Carson refers to the fallacy of interpreting according to the full semantic range of a word rather than the immediate context. He says, of the "unwarranted adoption of an expanded semantic field", "The fallacy in this instance lies in the supposition that the meaning of a word in a specific context is much broader than the context itself allows...."¹⁰ This seems to be precisely what those who seek to find evolution in the passage do.
 - 8 Days, *yamim*, the plural of days with a number in front of it, always means normal days. This is the word translated "days" in Exodus 20:8-11, which refers directly to the creation week.

⁷ John MacArthur, *The Battle For the Beginning: The Bible on Creation and the Fall of Adam* (USA: W Publishing Group, 2001), 19.

⁸ Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*, 74. Also see his handling and my later comments concerning the supposed exceptions to this statement.

⁹ Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*, 67.

¹⁰ D.A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House, 1984), 62.

- 9 The fourth commandment for keeping the Sabbath only makes sense if they were normal days (Ex. 20:8-11). The six days of work for man and the seventh for rest is based upon the fact that God created in six days and rested on the seventh; thus, establishing the work week for man based upon the week of creation. In addition, the plural for “days” of God’s creation week is the same as for man’s work week.
- 10 The repeated phrase “God said” conveys majestic instantaneous creative power beyond anything humans can either imitate or imagine, and this understanding is repeated throughout the Scripture (Nehemiah 9:6; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16). To read into that phrase the requirement of billions of years of time in order to stir the primordial soup long enough to produce an amoeba is a convoluted explanation that actually strips Genesis 1 of its majesty. The only thing more ridiculous than assuming that to be the teaching of Genesis 1 is to think anyone would ever reach that interpretation by the text alone; or to put it another way, if Darwinism was not the scientific paradigm of the day, would anyone seeking to be faithful to the Scripture be able to find evolution in Genesis 1?
- 11 Genesis 1:14 gives the normal time measurement units still in use today; further, it clearly distinguishes between a regular day, periods of months (seasons), and years. I am amazed how some take the clear wording of God creating in “days” and turn it into years, when the text clearly distinguishes years from days; further, some who do this are also, and not unexpectedly, uncomfortable with the longevity of life spoken about in the genealogies (Genesis 5 for example) and therefore, seek to make the years non-years.
- 12 In evolution, death is not only an essential but it is actually wonderful because the survival of the fittest takes place through the elimination of the weak; consequently, evolution is a theory of progress via pain, brutality, destruction, and death of the weakest members.

However, in the creation account, creation precedes death and is in no way dependent upon death. In Scripture death is the extraordinary and ghastly horror that resulted from man’s rebellion against God; further, day-age theorists must place death before the fall of man, thereby turning the biblical text upon its head, and making God proclaim death to be “very good” (Genesis 1:31).

Dr. Werner Gitt notes four basic tenets of evolution concerning death that make it irreconcilable with the creation account in Genesis: first, “Death is an essential prerequisite for evolution; second, Death is an invention of evolution; third, Death is the creator of life; fourth, Death is the final and absolute termination of life.”¹¹

Of course the Scripture is clear that death is neither from God nor evolution, but is the product of the man’s misuse of his freedom, which is sin, and sin is the progenitor of death (Genesis 2:17, 3:17-19; Romans 3:23, 5:12, 6:23); further,

¹¹ Dr. Werner Gitt, *Did God Use Evolution? Observations from a Scientist of Earth*, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, Inc., 2006), 33-35. He gives explanation and evidence for these conclusions.

according to the clear and consistent declaration of Scripture, death is something to be delivered from by faith in Christ (John 5:24), the last enemy to be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26,55), something that caused Jesus to weep (John 11:35), a penalty for further sin (Exodus 21:12ff), and something that will be conquered in the resurrection (Luke 20:34-46); further, death is not the absolute termination of human life (John 14:1-6; Revelation 20:11-15); moreover, God is not the God of the dead, or death (Luke 20:38), and death will be totally eradicated in the new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:4).

- 13 Do those who view Genesis as describing an evolutionary process with death, eating flesh, etc., believe that is what God will restore when He restores all things (Acts 3:21-22; Romans 8:20-22)?
- 14 God remarked after describing phases of His creation, "it was good" in vs.10,12, 18, 21,25, and He said concerning "all" that He had made "it was very good" v31. Now, according to the day-age theorists, this is a description of creation that happened according to the evolutionary process of which survival of the fittest, and elimination of the weakest through death is an essential element; therefore, if they are correct, God is calling death "very good". If death is "very good" then why was it a consequence for sin in Chapter 3, and considered an enemy that Christ had to destroy (1 Corinthians 15:26,55)?
- 15 When Jesus does refer to the Creation account, He refers to it as an historical fact, not allegory. He does so when referring to the creation of man and woman (Matthew 19:4) and marriage, (Matthew 19:5-6). This is true also with Paul's words about the origin of woman (1 Corinthians 11:8-9), the order of creation of man and woman and the order of sin (1 Timothy 2:13-14). He ties the doctrine of sin (Romans 5:12-20) and the doctrine of justification (1 Corinthians 15:22) to the reality of a literal Adam and a normal reading of the creation account. James also refers to Genesis as describing creation rather than evolution when he refers to man as created in the image of God (James 3:9).

The scripture simply looks back on the description of creation as recorded in Genesis 1-3 as a matter of a completed historical fact (Mark 13:19; John 1:3, 1:10; Acts 4:24, 14:15; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2, 10,11:3; Revelation 4:11, 10:6, 14:7).

- 16 Revelation 21 pictures the creation of the new heaven and earth, and one wonders if those who favor an evolutionary reading of the first creation believe the second creation will require billions of years before it will be inhabitable.
- 17 Jesus refers to man being there at the "beginning"; consequently, it seems an unwarranted stretch to make creation of the earth billions of years prior to the creation of man (Matthew 19:4).
- 18 Scripture teaches that God is compassionate (Deuteronomy 4:31), has great mercies (2 Samuel 24:14; Psalm 86:15) upon the weak and needy (Psalm 72:12-14), and blesses those who show mercy (Matthew 5:7). God is this by nature, which seems irreconcilable with Him creating via evolution since evolution is a brutal, horrifically torturous process that is merciless and actually thrives on the elimination of the weak or needy.

- 19 Evolutionists argue that nature does not give certain evidence of design, but the Scripture says that it does, and that evidence has been “clearly seen” so that men are “without excuse” (Romans 1:18). If a struggle for the survival of the fittest and the elimination of the weakest is what is really going on, how are God’s glorious power and attributes clearly seen?
- 20 Genesis 1-3 lays the foundation of every area of doctrine in the Scripture. For example, God (Theology proper), trustworthiness of God’s word (Bibliology), creation (Cosmology), uniqueness of man created in the image of God, distinct from the rest of creation (anthropology), sin (harmartiology), redemption (soteriology), angels (angelology), and future things (eschatology). Corruption of Genesis will necessarily, if consistency prevails, lead to further corruptions of Scripture and scriptural teachings elsewhere.
- 21 Genesis 1-2 depicts man as the apex of creation while evolution depicts him as the result of chance, death, pain and destruction; Genesis 1-2 presents man in the image of God while evolution presents him in the image of the material world; Genesis 1-2 presents man as over the animal world while evolution depicts man as from and a part of the animal world. While day-age theorists are quick to reject those kinds of consequences of evolution, they are more than willing to allow evolution to be the hermeneutical guide in interpreting the length of the days, which amounts to an incoherent hermeneutic.
- 22 There is not a place in the entire Scripture that compellingly teaches that the creation account should be taken as anything except a clear factual report of how God created the universe.
- 23 Man received life from divine inbreathing according to biblical creation (Genesis 1:26); whereas in the evolutionary model he received it through a cruel life and death struggle.
- 24 The outstanding feature of Genesis 1-2 is that “In the beginning God” and God alone, the most glorious, majestic, powerful being one could imagine, created all that there is. His glorious, limitless, sovereign power and majesty are reemphasized each time He brings into existence an aspect of the universe by merely speaking it into existence, which is something that is eternally beyond human understanding. The cumulative knowledge and power of the entire human race is infinitesimal in comparison. However, the day-age theory undeniably disguises that overarching declaration, which the simple reading of it magnifies. Day-age theorists may argue that their theory does not diminish His glorious attributes, but they argue quite futilely that it does not diminish the display of these attributes.

II Some supposed problem verses:

- 1 Genesis 2:2, some like Hugh Ross argue that the first six days had a *beginning* and *ending*, but the seventh does not; hence, he believes that this strongly suggests that the seventh day continues, which he believes gives weight to the day-age argument.
 - A However, by Ross’s logic, the seventh day did not have a beginning either. M. Maniguet notes, “... if Ross thinks the absence of *both* means the seventh

day has not ended, then to be consistent, it would follow that the seventh day had not *begun* either.”¹²

- 2 Genesis 2: 4 means more than one lunar day and therefore the use of *yôm* in Genesis 1 means more than one day.
 - A This is actually a different grammatical construction of *b^eyôm*, signifying “in the day” or an idiom for “when”.¹³ Further, there is not a number in front of the word day; therefore, it tells us nothing about the meaning of day in Genesis 1.
- 3 How could Adam have named all of the animals in a 24 hour period (Genesis 2:19)?
 - A First he did not name every *species* but rather it says every *kind*; second, even if there were as many as 2,500 kinds of animals, Adam could have completed his task of naming them in less than four hours.¹⁴ Consequently, Adam could have easily named them all.
 - B “Moreover, the allusion is not to the creation of all the beasts, but simply to that of the beasts living in the field (game and tame cattle), and of the fowls of the air,—to beasts, therefore, which had been formed like man from the earth, and thus stood in a closer relation to him than water animals or reptiles. For God brought the animals to Adam, to show him the creatures which were formed to serve him, that He might see what he would call them.”¹⁵
- 4 Concerning the use of *one day* in verse 17 as an exception to the rule that day with a number always means lunar day in the Old Testament. Day in 2:17 is the same form as in 2:4 (see objection 2); consequently, it is invalid to offer this use of the word day to demonstrate that the creation days were anything but lunar days; further, since immortality for man was dependent upon partaking of the tree of life, the use of day here does not mean a 24 hour period since in order for man to die as opposed to being immediately executed, he would have to be cut off from access to the tree of life, which God in fact did (Genesis 3:22-24) because that tree could perpetuate temporal life. In addition, some take this to mean that man did die an immediate spiritual death, and it is to this that God is referring.¹⁶ Many translate this as “when” as does the NIV, which signifies certainty rather than a specific time.
- 5 *Some* critics of a normal reading of Genesis 1 offer Genesis 2:29 as contradicting such a reading since this verse appears to place the creation of man before animals.
 - A As poignantly noted by Keil and Delitsch, “The circumstance that in v. 19 the formation of the beasts and birds is connected with the creation of Adam by the *imperf. c. 1 consec.*, constitutes no objection to the plan of creation given

¹² M. Maniguet, as quoted by Sarfati in *Refuting Compromise*, 83.

¹³ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:30). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁴ Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*, 89. He also deals with other problems associated with the not enough time conjecture.

¹⁵ C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 1:54-55.,

¹⁶ Gregory A. Lint, M.Div., Exec. Ed., *The Complete Biblical Library: The Old Testament, Volume 1: STUDY BIBLE, GENESIS*, (Springfield, MO: World Library Press, Inc., 1994), 31, articulates this position.

in Gen. 1. The arrangement may be explained on the supposition, that the writer, who was about to describe the relation of man to the beasts, went back to their creation, in the simple method of the early Semitic historians, and placed this first instead of making it subordinate; so that our modern style of expressing the same thought would be simply this: ‘God brought to Adam the beasts which He had formed.’”¹⁷

- B The NIV renders “formed” “had formed” to indicate that the animals were created prior to man, which is based upon the biblical use of this grammatical construction equivalent to the English pluperfect.¹⁸
 - C Others resolve the issue of how v. 19 relates to chapter 1 by arguing that the animals of v. 19 were “particular specimens” of the general creation. . . . “Lev. 17:13 distinguishes two kinds of animals, “beasts of the field” and “birds of the air,” from a third, “the livestock,” since the former must be hunted. This distinction occurs in vv. 19–20: the “livestock” presumably were already available with the man in Eden, but the wild beasts and birds required God to bring them to the man for naming.¹⁹
 - D Ken Matthews states, “We explained earlier, however, that chap. 2 has a topical order; the intent of the passage is to highlight the man’s dominion and the uniqueness of the woman’s creation, as opposed to the animals.”²⁰
- 6 Critics of taking the days in Genesis 1 as normal days use Zechariah 14:1-7 to illustrate that day here means more than a normal day; thus, Genesis does as well. In response to this:
- A Keil says, “In v. 7 this day is still more clearly described. . . as solitary in its kind. . . . [it]. . . is not equivalent to. . . ‘only one day, not two or more’ . . . , but solitary in its kind, unparalleled by any other, because no second of the kind ever occurs. . . . It is necessary to take the words in this manner on account of the following clause, ‘it will be known to the Lord;’ i.e., not ‘it will be singled out by Jehovah in the series of days as the appropriate one’ . . . , nor ‘it stands under the supervision and guidance of the Lord, so that it does not come unexpectedly, or interfere with His plans’ . . . it is known to the Lord according to its true nature, and therefore is distinguished above all other days.”²¹

Consequently, the use of the number one with day here signifies a “unique” day (vs. 7) rather than “one” day in numbering or sequencing days, which is contrary to its usage in Genesis 1 where both numbering and sequencing are apparent and undeniable. Further, the very meaning of “unique” is one of a

¹⁷Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1:54. (Genesis 2:19 comments)

¹⁸*The Holy Bible: New International Version*, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984), Gen. 2:19. See the arguments for this in *Refuting Compromise*, 92, and *The New American Commentary* Volume 1A, 215, footnote 114.

¹⁹K. A. Mathews, *The New American Commentary, Volume 1A*, electronic ed., Logos Library System (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1995), Genesis 1-11:26. footnote 3

²⁰Mathews, *New American Commentary*, Genesis 1-11:26.

²¹Keil & Delitzsch *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 10:621. See also *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Regency Reference Library, 1985) where it defines ‘one’ as unique, 692.

kind, which while it may be more than a twenty-four hour day, it is also a unique day and therefore incomparable to any other day; moreover, it seems quite reasonable to conclude that since this day is described by the Scripture as “unique” it should therefore not be used to evaluate the meaning of the word day used elsewhere in Scripture. In fact, not only is the context different here than the creation account, and the day in question described uniquely, it should have no bearing on the meaning of the word day in the creation account since Genesis 1 gives every indication of *not* being unique but normal days.

7. Hosea 6:2 is also used to argue against a normal day in Genesis 1
 - a. There are two basic reasons why this passage fails to be a plausible argument against Genesis 1 being lunar days; first, the point of the passage is what would take place would take place *soon* or *quickly*. Therefore, it is easy to read this as referring to twenty-four hour days or parts of normal days, which is common in the use of the word days in both the Old Testament, (Genesis 42:17-18; 1 Samuel 30:12-13; 1 Kings 20:29; Esther 4:15-5:1) and in the New Testament referring to the resurrection of Christ, (Matthew 12:40 & Mark 16:9; Matthew 27:63-64; 1 Corinthians 15:4 & Luke 24:7). However, if it is understood to refer to long periods of time, this would contradict the very intent of the passage. Consider *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, which says, “The equivalent expressions, after two days and on the third day, refer to a short period of time, indicating they expected the revival to occur soon.”²² Or Keil and Delitzsch’s comment, “By the definition ‘after two days,’ and ‘on the third day,’ the speedy and certain revival of Israel is set before them. Two and three days are very short periods of time”²³ consequently, the days are better understood as short periods or days and not indefinite eons of time. Second, they go on to note, “linking together of two numbers following one upon the other, expresses the certainty of what is to take place within this space of time, just as in the so-called numerical sayings in Amos 1:3, Job 5:19, Prov. 6:16; 30:15, 18, in which the last and greater number expresses the highest or utmost that is generally met with.”²⁴

²²J. F. Walvoord, R. B. Zuck, & Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 1:1393.

²³Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 10:63.

²⁴Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 10:63.