

Chapter 2

Six days? Really?

- Are the days of creation ordinary days?
- Could they be long periods of time?
- Why six days? Is Genesis poetry?
- Does the length of the days really affect the Gospel?
- How can there be ‘days’ without the sun on the first three days?
- Does Genesis 2 contradict Genesis 1?
- What about the Framework Hypothesis?

Why is it important?

DOES it really matter if the days of creation in Genesis 1 are real, approximately 24-hour days? Many would say it doesn’t matter. In fact, the view that the days should be understood as ‘ordinary’ days is probably a minority view in churches today, although in the past this was not the case.

Some say that the days can be understood as eons of time, but that God stepped in to do some of the more incredible things at various times—like making pine trees and people. This so-called ‘progressive creation’ view has God creating *progressively* over eons of time.¹

Others claim that Genesis is a mere literary device, a framework upon which hangs important theological teaching—like clothes hanging on a clothesline. They argue that the clothes are the important thing, not the clothesline, so we should not be worried about trying to connect Genesis to the history of the world (this is the ‘framework hypothesis’).²

1. See Sarfati, J., *Refuting Compromise*, (2nd edn), Creation Book Publishers, Powder Springs, GA, 2011, for a thorough refutation.

2. Meredith Kline and Henri Blocher promote this view.

Yet others say God used evolution to make everything (‘theistic evolution’) and that Genesis has no relevance to understanding the history of the universe; it is some sort of ‘myth’. Science tells us when and how the universe came into being; the Bible tells us why. They are two separate domains of knowledge.³

The above views tend to overlap in a fuzzy way in the minds of many who have not thought logically about the effect of these views on the Gospel.

All such ‘re-interpretations’ derive from an attempt to harmonize the Bible’s Creation/Fall/Flood account (Genesis 1–11) with the claim of modern historical science that the universe is billions of years old. In this view, rocks containing fossils on Earth formed over eons of time, mostly before people appeared.

The fossil record, so *interpreted*, speaks of death and suffering on a massive scale—which mostly happened before people were created (or evolved). However, this view has serious repercussions for the rest of the Bible, because it:

1. Undermines the goodness of God

Non-Christians object, ‘How can you believe in a loving God when there is so much suffering in the world?’ They cite animal suffering as part of the problem. According to the history in Genesis, God created everything and He described it as ‘very good’ after he finished creating the first people, Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:31). It was so good that the people and animals were vegetarian (Genesis 1:29–30)—it is hard to imagine a world like that. It was human sin (rebellion against the Maker and Sustainer of the universe) that brought death and suffering into God’s good creation (Genesis 3).

Romans 8:18–25 affirms that the whole creation (not just people) has been “*subjected to futility*” and is now “*groaning*” and “*in bondage to decay*”, waiting for its redemption. Leading commentators on Romans such as F.F. Bruce, C.E.B. Cranfield, and James Dunn agree that Paul here refers to the Fall.⁴ This is consistent with the real history of Genesis 3,

3. This view is promoted by organizations such as the American Scientific Affiliation, Christians in Science (UK) and the Institute for the Study of Christianity in an Age of Science and Technology (ISCAST; Australia), strangely paralleling the view of the late atheist Stephen Jay Gould on NOMA (non-overlapping magisteria); creation.com/noma.

4. For more information, see Sarfati, J., The Fall: a cosmic catastrophe—Hugh Ross’s blunders on plant death in the Bible, *Journal of Creation* 19(3):60–64, 2005; creation.com/plant_death; Smith, H., Cosmic and universal death from Adam’s Fall: An exegesis of Romans 8:19–23a, *Journal of Creation* 21(1):75–85, 2007; creation.com/romans8.

where the creation, not just the people, was cursed because of the man's sin. For example, the ground would now bring forth thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:18). There are thorns preserved in the fossil record, supposedly some 300 million years before man came on the scene. If this is really so, as the above 're-interpretations' maintain, then the Bible misleads.

In reality, we live in a corrupt creation because of man's sin; it was not created this way. Christians have had this view from the beginning. John Milton's classic poems *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* reflect this Christian worldview that was once accepted almost without question.⁵ But if God created over billions of years, He is most decidedly *not* 'good'. In such a view, He would have sanctioned and overseen death, disease, cruelty, and suffering for billions of years—before sin entered the universe—and called his death-ridden creation all 'very good'.

2. Undermines the Gospel

The New Testament clearly teaches that the reason for Jesus' death and Resurrection depends on the real historical events of Genesis 1–3, that death entered the creation through the sin of the first man:

“For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:21, 22; see also Romans 5:12–21).

Jesus is called “*the last Adam*” (1 Corinthians 15:45) because he came to undo the work of the first Adam. He took upon Himself, in His body on the Cross, the Curse of death for the lost race of Adam (Galatians 3:13; Colossians 1:22).

Clearly, the teaching about the reason for Jesus' death depends upon the events in Genesis being real: that physical death originated with Adam's sin and that it was not already a part of the created order. Those who devalue the history of Genesis often claim that Adam's death was only 'spiritual' (separation from God). But it was also physical death: “*from dust you came and to dust you will return*” (Genesis 3:19). Thus Jesus also died a physical death on the Cross. He also rose from the dead, bodily, victorious, having dealt with the Curse of death that came through Adam.

If death was always a part of 'creation', how can it be “*the last enemy*” (1 Corinthians 15:26) and why did Jesus have to die?

5. Batten, D. and Sarfati, J., *15 Reasons to Take Genesis as History*, Creation Book Publishers, Powder Springs, GA, USA, 2006.

3. Undermines eschatology (end-times doctrines)

The Bible speaks of a future where the present order will be destroyed and God will make a new heavens and earth where there will be no more suffering and pain—the former things will have passed away (2 Peter 3:10–13; Revelation 21:4–5). But if God ‘created’ things much as we see them, with death and suffering intrinsic to the created order, which the previously mentioned views of Genesis suppose, why would God want to destroy the existing order and create a new one?

Why does Revelation equate the removal of the Genesis Curse with the removal of death and pain (Revelation 21:4, 22:2), if the Curse did not bring those things into the world in the first place? It does not make sense.

It also undermines the teaching about the future restoration (Romans 8:21, Acts 3:21)—‘restoration’ means return to a former state, so are Christians supposed to be encouraged by a return to millions of years of death and suffering?⁶

4. Undermines hermeneutics (how we understand the Bible)

If Genesis cannot be understood as history, as it is meant to be (as we will show), then how should we understand the rest of the Bible? Perhaps the account of the Exodus or the Exile in Babylon did not actually happen (it is the same form of literature); maybe these writings are just theological arguments (the framework idea)? Perhaps the accounts in the New Testament of Jesus’ teaching, death and Resurrection are not actually history (although it seems like they are)?

Furthermore, any view that disconnects Genesis from history:

- **Undermines confidence in the rest of the Bible**

If Genesis cannot be understood as straight-forward history, where does history begin? Many accept that Abraham (Genesis 12) was a real person, but refer to some of his ancestors as metaphors (especially Adam). But Jesus’ genealogy goes back to Adam (Luke 3)—so where do metaphors begin and end?

Jesus took Genesis as history.⁷ Was the Son of God mistaken? ‘Darwin’s Bulldog’, Thomas Huxley, put his finger on the problem when he commented long ago,

6. See also Verderame, J. Theistic evolution: future shock? *Creation* 20(3):18, 1998 and Grigg, R., The future—some issues for ‘long-age’ Christians, *Creation* 25(4):50–51, 2003; creation.com/future.

7. See also Sarfati, J., Genesis: Bible authors believed it to be history, *Creation* 28(2):21–23, 2006; creation.com/gen-hist.

“I soon lose my way when I try to follow those who walk delicately among ‘types’ and allegories. A certain passion for clearness forces me to ask, bluntly, whether the writer means to say that Jesus did not believe the stories in question, or that he did? When Jesus spoke, as of a matter of fact, that ‘the Flood came and destroyed them all,’ did he believe that the Deluge really took place, or not?”⁸

- **Undermines other doctrines that are based on Genesis**

For example, doctrines relating to marriage, moral law, the wearing of clothing, and the meaning and purpose of our existence are all based on the history of events in Genesis.

Why not believe they are ordinary days?

Many theologians admit that Genesis seems like straightforward history, but do not believe it. Why? The following typifies the thinking:

“It is apparent that the most straightforward understanding of Genesis *without regard to all the hermeneutical considerations suggested by science*, is that God created the heaven and earth in six solar days, that man was created on the sixth day, that death and chaos entered the world after the fall of Adam and Eve, and that all the fossils were the result of the catastrophic universal deluge which spared only Noah’s family, and the animals therewith.”⁹ [our *emphasis*]

Note that the author says; “without regard to all the hermeneutical considerations suggested by science”, he would believe Genesis is a straightforward historical account of real events.

In other words, for many theologians, ‘science’ is the authority, not the Word of God. We submit that this confidence in ‘science’ to be able to dictate a ‘re-interpreting’ of Genesis is misplaced. The conjectures of ‘historical science’ (or origins science) provide no firm foundation for anything, let alone meddling with the Word of the eternal God who knows everything (see ‘Is it science?’, Chapter 1).

Indeed, the widely respected systematic theologian Louis Berkhof recognized that, contrary to historical science interpreting Genesis, we need the Bible to understand natural history:

“Originally God revealed Himself in creation, but through the blight of sin that original revelation was obscured. Moreover, it was entirely insufficient in the condition of things that obtained after the

8. Huxley, T., *Science and Hebrew Tradition Essays 1*, p. 232, 1897.

9. Pun, P.P.T., *J. Amer. Scientific Affiliation* 39:14, 1987.

fall. Only God's self-revelation in the Bible can now be considered adequate. It only conveys a knowledge of God that is pure, that is, free from error and superstition, and that answers to the spiritual needs of fallen man ... Some are inclined to speak of God's general revelation as a second source; but this is hardly correct in view of the fact that nature can come into consideration here only as interpreted in the light of Scripture."¹⁰

This aptly states a major objection to those who argue that nature is the 67th book of the Bible and who use that 'book' (as interpreted by the majority of scientists) to, in turn, interpret the days of creation as long periods of time.

Christians should base their thinking on the Bible.

How has Genesis been understood in the past?

There are two reasons for looking at the history of how Genesis has been interpreted:

1. Generally: If long-age interpretations had always been popular, then a case could be made for assuming that the Bible hints at this. But if they were absent until they became popular in 'science', it's more likely that such interpretations were motivated by trying to reconcile the Bible with 'science'.
2. Specifically for those who advocate 'deep time' within the church: in order to overcome the charge that they are motivated by 'science' and not the biblical text, they often *claim that interpreters throughout history have allowed for long creation days*. Therefore it's important to examine the evidence for this claim.

The Church Fathers

Basil the Great (AD 329–379), in a series of sermons on the six days of creation, the *Hexaëmeron*, argued that the plain meaning was intended: the days were ordinary days; God's commands instantaneously filled Earth with shrubbery, caused trees to shoot up and suddenly filled rivers with fish; that animals did not originally eat each other; that the sun was created after the earth; etc. He also spoke against evolutionary ideas of humans springing from animals.¹¹ Note that Darwin did not

10. Berkhof, L. *Introductory volume to Systematic Theology*, Eerdmans, p. 96, 1932.

11. Batten, D., Genesis means what it says: Basil (AD 329–379), *Creation* 16(4):23, 1994: creation.com/basil, after Basil, *Hexaëmeron* 2:8.

invent evolution; such ideas go back to anti-theistic philosophers before Christ—such as Anaximander, Epimenides and Lucretius. It has been a pagan, anti-God idea from its earliest origins.

Some have misconstrued the Church Fathers' positions because they have not read them carefully. It was usual in the Eastern Orthodox Church (EO) to view the Creation Week as real, but they often, in parallel, viewed it as typologically pointing to a total Earth history of seven thousand years until the end. They most definitely did not regard the days of Creation Week as long periods of time.

The late Seraphim Rose, an EO priest, meticulously documented the views of the Church Fathers of the EO church, showing that they viewed Genesis the way modern creationists do.¹² Terry Mortenson, who earned a Ph.D. in the history of geology, reviewed the book:

“His [Rose’s] primary sources are early ‘Fathers’ who wrote commentaries on Genesis: John Chrysostom (344–407), Ephraim the Syrian (306–372), Basil the Great (329–379) and Ambrose of Milan (339–397). But he also used many other ‘Fathers’ of that and later centuries who wrote on some aspect of Genesis 1–11.”¹³

Rose showed how the EO Church Fathers were unanimous in their view of the historicity of Creation Week, the Fall and the global Flood. They also believed that God’s creative acts were *instantaneous*. They saw the pre-Fall world as fundamentally and profoundly different from the post-Fall one of today.

Some cite Augustine and Origen to justify the smuggling of ‘deep time’ into the Bible. These two gentlemen, being of the Alexandrian School, tended to allegorize various passages of Scripture. Their allegorization of the days of creation did not arise from within the text, but from outside influences, namely their adherence to neo-Platonic philosophy (whereby they ‘reasoned’ that God would not sully himself with being bound by time constraints, etc.). But, contrary to the positions of those who would use Augustine and Origen to prop up their own ‘deep time’ accommodation, both said that God created everything in an instant, *not* over long periods of time. And they *explicitly* argued for the biblical timeframe of thousands of years, as well as the global Flood of Noah.¹⁴

12. Fr Rose’s papers were published posthumously in *Genesis, Creation and Early Man*, Platina, CA, 2000.

13. Mortenson, T., Orthodoxy and Genesis: What the fathers *really* taught, *Journal of Creation* 16(3):48–53, 2002; creation.com/seraphim.

14. Origen, *Contra Celsum (Against Celsus)* 1.19; Augustine, *De Civitate Dei (The City of God)*, 12(10); see Zuiddam, B., Augustine: young earth creationist; creation.com/augustine, 2009.

Now, some may argue that the Church Fathers erred in their interpretation, that we now have superior knowledge. But modern academics are not the first who have known about the original languages and cultures of the Bible. The onus is on those proposing a new interpretation to prove their case.

The Reformers

Calvin said; “The day-night cycle was instituted from Day 1, before the sun was created [commenting on “let there be light”]” and “Here the error of those is manifestly refuted, who maintain that the world was made in a moment [almost certainly referring to Augustine and Origen]. For it is too violent a cavil to contend that Moses distributes the work which God perfected at once into six days, for the mere purpose of conveying instruction [foreshadowing the framework idea?]. Let us rather conclude that God himself took the space of six days, for the purpose of accommodating his works to the capacity of men.” And, “They will not refrain from guffaws when they are informed that but little more than five thousand years have passed since the creation of the universe.” And, “And the flood was forty days, &c. Moses copiously insists on this fact, in order to show that the whole world was immersed in the waters.”¹⁵

Luther wrote even more explicitly of these issues, clearly stating his acceptance of the historicity of Genesis. He also dealt with skeptics’ claims of supposed contradictions between Genesis 1 and 2 (see later).¹⁶

Opponents of the historicity of Genesis love to refer to Ronald Numbers’ book *The Creationists*. Numbers supposedly showed that young-earth ‘creationism’ was invented by a Seventh-day Adventist, George McCready



John Calvin

TFE Graphics

Price, in the 1920s. This has to be one of the most incredible examples of historical revisionism, on par with the myth that the ancients in

15. Documented in Sarfati, J., Calvin said, Genesis means what it says, *Creation* 22(4):44–45, 2000. creation.com/calvin.

16. Bartz, P., Luther on evolution, *Creation* 6(3):18–21, 2005; creation.com/luther.



Martin Luther

general, and the church in particular, held to a flat Earth (which was totally demolished by historian Jeffrey Burton Russell¹⁷). It is as if Numbers, a historian, knows nothing of history before Price. The above material on the Church Fathers and reformers is sufficient to show the error of Numbers' work. But there is much more that refutes it. See the research of the earth science historian Terry Mortenson on the geologists of the early 1800s who defended the biblical age of Earth and the global Flood of Genesis.¹⁸

Why must they be ordinary days?¹⁹

1. Genesis was written as history, not poetry

Hebrew has special grammatical forms for recording history, and Genesis 1–11 uses those. It has the same structure as Genesis 12 onwards and most of Exodus, Joshua, Judges, etc. It is *not* poetry or allegory.

Genesis is peppered with “*And ... and ... and ...*”, which characterizes historical writing (this is technically called the *vav* (ו), often rendered as *waw*, consecutive).

The Hebrew verb forms of Genesis 1 have a particular feature that fits exactly what the Hebrews used for recording history or a series of past events. That is, only the first verb is perfect (*qatal*), while the verbs that continue the narrative are imperfects (*vayyiqtol*).²⁰ In Genesis 1, the first verb, *bara* (create), is perfect, while the subsequent verbs that move the narrative forward are imperfect.²¹ A proper translation in English recognizes this Hebrew form and translates all the verbs as perfect (or past) tense.

17. Russell, J.B., *Inventing the Flat Earth: Columbus & Modern Historians*, Praeger, New York, 1991. See his summary at www.asa3.org/ASA/topics/history/1997Russell.html.

18. See Mortenson, T., *The Great Turning Point*, Master Books, Green Forest, AR, 2004, based on his Ph.D. thesis at Coventry University; creation.com/turning_point.

19. For detailed treatment of this whole subject, see Chapter 2 in Sarfati, J., *Refuting Compromise*, Creation Book Publishers, Powder Springs, GA, 2011.

20. Joüon, P. and Muraoka, T., *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew: Part Three: Syntax*, p. 390, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, 1991.

21. See also a statistical analysis of the Hebrew verb forms by Hebraic scholar Steven Boyd. The biblical Hebrew Creation account: New numbers tell the story, *ICR Impact* 377, 2004; www.icr.org/article/biblical-hebrew-creation-account-new-numbers-tell-/.

Genesis 1–11 also has several other hallmarks of historical narrative, such as ‘accusative particles’ that mark the objects of verbs. Terms are often carefully defined. Also, parallelisms, a feature of Hebrew poetry (e.g. in many Psalms), are almost absent in Genesis.²²

The rare pieces of poetry (e.g. Genesis 1:27 and 2:23) comment on real events anyway, as do many of the Psalms (e.g. Psalm 78). Even if Genesis were poetic, it would not necessarily make it non-historical.

The strongest *structural* parallel of Genesis 1 is Numbers 7:10–84. Both are structured accounts, both contain the Hebrew word for day (יוֹם *yôm*) with a numeric—indeed both are numbered *sequences* of days. In Numbers 7, each of the 12 tribes brought an offering on the different days:

“The one who brought his offering on the first day was Nahshon, son of Amminadab of the tribe of Judah. ...

On the second day Nethanel son of Zuar, the leader of Issachar, brought his offering ...

On the third day, Eliab son of Helon, the leader of the people of Zebulun, brought his offering. ...

On the twelfth day Ahira son of Enan, the leader of the people of Naphtali, brought his offering. ...”

The parallel is even stronger when we note that Numbers 7 not only has each day (יוֹם *yôm*) numbered, but also opens and closes with “*in the day that*” to refer collectively to all the ordinary days of the sequence. In spite of the use of “*in the day that*” in verses 10 and 84, no-one doubts that the numbered day sequence in Numbers 7 (verses 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42, 48, 54, 60, 66, 72, 78) involves anything but ordinary-length days, because these days lack a preposition like ‘in’. This refutes the claim that “*in the day that*” (בַּיּוֹם *beyôm*²³) in Genesis 2:4, summarizing Creation Week, shows that the Genesis 1 days are *not* normal-length. This is simply a Hebrew idiom for ‘when’ (see NASB, NIV Genesis 2:4 cf. Numbers 7:10, 84).²⁴

In this structured narrative (Numbers 7) with a sequence of numbered days, no one claims that it is merely a poetic framework for teaching something theological and that it is not history. No-one doubts

22. Kaiser, W.C., Jr, The literary form of Genesis 1–11; in: Payne, J.B., *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, Word Inc., Waco, TX, pp. 59–60, 1970.

23. Actually, the verses in Numbers 7 have *bayôm*, where the ‘a’ represents the definite article, ‘the’, meaning ‘on the day [xth]’, unlike *beyôm*, which lacks the article.

24. Sarfati, J., Hebrew scholar affirms that Genesis means what it says! Interview with Dr Ting Wang, Lecturer in Biblical Hebrew, *Creation* 27(4):48–51, 2005; creation.com/wang.

that the days in Numbers 7 are ordinary days, so there is no grammatical basis for denying the same for the Genesis 1 days. That is, Genesis 1 is straightforward history.

Hebrew scholars concur that Genesis was written as history. For example, the Oxford Hebrew scholar James Barr wrote:

“... probably, so far as I know, there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of Gen. 1–11 intended to convey to their readers the ideas that

- (a) creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience
- (b) the figures contained in the Genesis genealogies provided by simple addition a chronology from the beginning of the world up to later stages in the biblical story
- (c) Noah’s flood was understood to be world-wide and extinguish all human and animal life except for those in the ark.”²⁵

Barr, consistent with his neo-orthodox views, does not *believe* Genesis, but he understands what the Hebrew writer clearly intended to convey. Some criticize our use of the Barr quote, because he does not believe in the historicity of Genesis. But that is precisely why we use his statement: he is a *hostile witness*. With no need to try to harmonize Genesis with anything, because he does not see it as carrying any authority, Barr is free to state the clear intention of the author. This contrasts with some ‘evangelical’ theologians who try to retain some sense of authority without actually believing it says much, if anything, about history—‘wrestling with the text’, we’ve heard it called.

Hebrew scholar Dr Steven Boyd has shown, using a statistical comparison of verb type frequencies of historical and poetic Hebrew texts, that Genesis 1 is clearly historical narrative, not ‘poetry’. He concluded, “There is only one tenable view of its plain sense: God created everything in six literal days.”²⁶

25. Barr, J., Letter to David C.C. Watson, 23 April 1984.

26. Boyd, S.W., The biblical Hebrew creation account: new numbers tell the story, *Impact* 377, 2004; www.icr.org/article/biblical-hebrew-creation-account-new-numbers-tell/.

Some other Hebrew scholars who support literal creation days include:

- Dr Andrew Steinmann, Associate Professor of Theology and Hebrew at Concordia University in Illinois.²⁷
- Dr Robert McCabe, Professor of Old Testament at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary in Allen Park, MI.²⁸
- Dr Ting Wang, lecturer in biblical Hebrew at Stanford University.²⁹

2. The use of ‘day’ in Genesis 1 compared to other Hebrew Scripture

A basic principle of understanding a Bible passage is to compare the use of words and phrases with other parts of the Bible.

How is the word ‘day’ used in Genesis 1? This is the context of usage of ‘day’ (as literally as possible, as per the *New American Standard Bible* here):

“And God called the light day and the darkness he called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day ... and there was evening and there was morning, a second day ... a third day ... a fourth day ... a fifth day ... the sixth day.”

It is significant that the standard Hebrew lexicon indicates ‘day’ in Gen 1:5 as a ‘day of twenty-four hours’.³⁰ This ‘day’ is defined by an evening and a morning cycle; night and day, as well as a number. There should be no need to go further—it is as plain as day what ‘day’ means in Genesis 1! As the nineteenth-century liberal, Professor Marcus Dods, New College, Edinburgh, said:

“... if, for example, the word ‘day’ in these chapters does not mean a period of twenty-four hours, the interpretation of Scripture is hopeless.”³¹

Note that ‘day’ is used with a number in Genesis 1. It is used as a singular or plural with a number 410 times outside of Genesis 1 and it

27. Steinmann, A., אֶחָד [echad] as an ordinal number and the meaning of Genesis 1:5, *JETS* 45(4):577–584, 2002; www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/45/45-4/45-4-PP577-584_JETS.pdf.

28. McCabe, R.V., A defense of literal days in the Creation Week, *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 5:97–123, 2000; www.dbts.edu/journals/2000/mccabe.pdf.

29. Sarfati, 2005; creation.com/wang.

30. Koehler, K. and Baumgartner, W. (Eds.), Richardson, M.E.J. (trans.), *Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 2002.

31. Dods, M., 1888, as cited by Kelly, D.F., *Creation and Change*, Christian Focus Publications, Fearn, UK, p. 112, 1997.

always means an ordinary day.³²

Evening and *morning* are used together without *day* 38 times outside Genesis 1 and it always indicates an ordinary day. *Evening* or *morning* are used 23 times each with *day* outside Genesis 1 and it always means an ordinary day. And *night* is used with *day* 52 times and it always indicates an ordinary day.

Scripture and logic dictate that we have no option but to understand *day* in Genesis 1 as an ‘ordinary’ day.

The Hebrew word for ‘day’, *yom*, is used in several ways in Genesis 1 that show that the days were ordinary days.

3. Creation Week is the basis of the 7-day week

Exodus 20:11 summarizes the Creation Week. It eliminates any possibility of an extended timescale by *any* interpretive scheme (framework hypothesis, day-age idea, all gap theories—see Chapter 3, God’s days-not-our-days, days of revelation, etc.), since it is given as the basis for our seven-day week with a day of rest (v. 10):

“For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Note, Exodus 20:1: *“And God spoke all these words, saying,”* These are the very words of God himself, not the ideas of Moses, or some redactor or even one of the imaginary scribes, J, E, D or P, who supposedly lived a millennium after the event (long discredited nonsense taught, sadly, at many theological institutions).^{33,34}

God took six days to make *everything*—there is nothing other than the *“heavens and earth, the seas and all that is in them”*. This is an all inclusive statement that emphasizes completeness.



32. The numbers come from Stambaugh, J., *The days of creation: A semantic approach*, Proc. Evangelical Society’s Far West Region Meeting, The Master’s Seminary, Sun Valley, CA, 1996.

33. Grigg, R., *Did Moses really write Genesis?* *Creation* 20(4):43–46, 1998. creation.com/jedp.

34. Holding, J.P., *Does Genesis hold up under critic’s scrutiny?* (response to critic of Grigg, 1998); creation.com/moses-critic.

‘God made the universe’ would be an appropriate paraphrase.³⁵ Then God ceased from his work on the seventh day, the day of ‘rest’. God did not need six days to make everything and He did not need to rest (Isaiah 40:28), but He did it in this manner and timeframe as a pattern for our week. That’s where our 7-day week came from.

This Scripture alone counters all attempts to stretch the timeframe for the universe’s existence.

Other arguments used against six days

1. Sometimes ‘day’ can mean other than an ordinary day

No one denies that ‘day’ can have several meanings, as it does in English, but the context of a numbered day with an evening and a morning defines the days in Genesis 1 as ordinary days. “*In the day that ...*” in Genesis 2:4 is a Hebrew idiom for ‘when’, as explained earlier, and it does not have a number *or* evening *or* morning to define it as an ordinary day.

Consider the following English sentence:

In my father’s day, he would go to bed early Sunday evening and rise early in the morning of the following day, and spend the next six days travelling, during the day, to cross the whole country. The various meanings of ‘day/days’ are quite clear from the context and other languages are similar, including Hebrew. Indeed, all the meanings of day/days in this sentence are found in Genesis 1, 2 and Exodus 20:11.

Some cite “*with the Lord, a day is as a thousand years*” (2 Peter 3:8) to make each of the days of creation a thousand years long (or longer). This is a misuse of Scripture. Note that the Bible **compares** the thousand years with a day (it is *as* or *like* a day), not that it *is* a day. The Bible teaches us here simply that what might seem like a long time to us waiting for the second coming of Christ is nothing to the eternal God—He is patient, waiting for people to repent of their sin. This has nothing to do with the meaning of ‘day’ in Genesis 1. In fact, the figure of speech is so effective precisely because the day is *literal* and contrasts so vividly with 1,000 years—to the eternal Creator of time, a short period of time and a long period of time may as well be the same.

35. It is a figure of speech called a *merism*, in which two opposites are combined into an all-encompassing single concept. In English we have ‘open day and night’ to mean ‘open for the entire 24-hr cycle, as well as ‘far and near’, ‘hill and vale’ and ‘high and low’. ‘Heavens and earth’ was used for the totality of creation, because biblical Hebrew had no word for ‘the universe’. See Leupold, H.C., *Exposition of Genesis 1*:41, Baker Book House, Michigan, 1942. Leupold cites similar usage in Jeremiah 10:16, Isaiah 44:24, Psalm 103:19, 119:91, and Ecclesiastes 11:5.

A parallel passage in Psalm 90:4 compares a thousand years to a watch in the night (three or four hours) in God's sight, yet no one claims that the night watch could last a thousand years! This passage again underlines that Scripture here contrasts God's eternal perspective with our temporal one. As the respected commentator John Gill said, "the words aptly express the disproportion there is between the eternal God and mortal man". They have nothing to do with the meaning of 'day' in Genesis 1.³⁶

2. Genesis 1 and 2 are contradictory accounts of creation, so why should we believe Genesis 1 as history?

Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 are not different accounts of creation and they are not contradictory. Genesis 1 deals with the creation of everything, the universe, the 'big picture' (see Gen. 1:31–2:4a). Genesis 2 recaps the creation of the man and woman, providing details not provided in the first chapter and particularly their situation in the special garden God prepared for them. Chapter 2 is *not* another creation account: there is no mention of the creation of the earth, sun, moon, stars, seas, land, sky, sea creatures, creeping things, etc.

Some cite an apparent difference in order of creation between Chapters 1 and 2, claiming a problem with the plants and herbs in Genesis 2:5 and the trees in Genesis 2:9, which in some English translations seem as though they came into being *after* Adam, supposedly contradicting the order in Genesis 1 (plants on Day 3, people on Day 6).

But Genesis 2 focuses on issues of direct importance to Adam and Eve and the garden, not creation in general. Notice that the plants and herbs are described as 'of the field' in chapter 2 (compare 1:12) and they needed a man to tend them (2:5). These are clearly cultivated plants, not plants in general. Also, the trees (2:9) are only the trees planted in the garden, not trees in general. These events relate to God creating the garden, not creation in general.

The mention of the forming of the 'beasts of the field' and 'birds of the air' in Genesis 2:19, before the creation of Eve, is also supposedly a problem.

The supposed contradictions fall away when we realize that Hebrew has no specific verb form to indicate the pluperfect ('had formed', 'having formed'). A number of Hebrew scholars and commentators, such as Keil & Delitzsch and Leupold, have recognized that the context

36. Sarfati, J., 2 Peter 3:8—'one day is like a thousand years', *Creation* 31(4):16, 2009; creation.com/thousand.

of Genesis 2 suggests the pluperfect tense for these events—they are being recounted for the purposes of Chapter 2. For example:

“*Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field...*” (2:19, ESV). Such a translation, which is valid, removes any hint of contradiction.

There is no need to conclude that Genesis 2 contradicts Genesis 1 and so this is not a valid argument against taking Genesis 1 as straightforward history.³⁷

Genesis 2 is not a *different* account of creation—it is a *more detailed* account of the sixth day of creation.

3. Adam could not have named all the animals in one day (Day 6)

Adam did not name every *species* of living thing on Earth today, which *would* be rather difficult—he only had to name the animals that God brought to him. The animals named were “*the cattle, the birds of the sky, and every beast of the field*” (Genesis 2:20)—the creatures relevant to man’s macro-environment. The sea creatures and “*everything that creeps upon the earth*” were not included. Also, even within the named set, there would not have been hundreds of *species* of parrots to name, but maybe only a single parrot *kind*, or a few, for example. God apparently gave Adam the naming exercise as an act of sovereignty (Adam was to rule—Genesis 1:28—and naming something is an exercise of sovereignty). The naming also emphasized to Adam that he was missing something: a mate. Eve was then created, with Adam being most appreciative!

We need to remember that Adam was created perfect, with language, and would have had no trouble in his unfallen state in naming this subset of creatures in a few hours.³⁸

4. The sun was not created until Day 4, so how could the first three days have been ordinary days?

The creation of light before the sun was noted by early Church Fathers and the later Reformers without any problem, but some raise it today as if creationists had never thought of it. E.g. in AD 180, Theophilus of Antioch noted that it made nonsense of sun-worship because God made the plants before the sun, and Basil said the same.³⁹

37. For more, see Batten, D., Genesis contradictions? *Creation* 18(4):44–45, 1996; creation.com/Genesis_contradictions.

38. Grigg, R., Naming the animals: all in a day’s work for Adam, *Creation* 18(4):46–49, 1996; creation.com/animalnames.

39. Theophilus, *To Autolytus* 2:15, Basil, *Hexaëmeron* 6:2.

The most basic definition of a day is ‘the time for Earth to make a complete rotation on its axis’. All we need for a day is Earth to be rotating. To demarcate the day with evening and morning, we then need a directional source of light so that the rotating Earth causes the night and day cycle that is described for each day in Genesis 1. The Bible says that in the latter part of the first day, following the period of darkness (Genesis 1:1–2) “*God said, ‘Let there be light’ and there was light*” (v. 3). So we have a source of light and a rotating Earth and we have days happening: “*and there was evening and there was morning, one day*”.

Those who would claim that the first days had to be a different length have to suppose that God changed the speed of rotation of Earth on its axis, when he created the *greater light* as the light bearer (Genesis 1:14), which is hardly likely.

Scripture gives no hint that the days were any different: the same formula applies for Days 2 and 3 as for Days 4 and 5 (*there was evening and there was morning, a second/third/fourth/fifth day*).

5. The seventh day has not finished, so the other days could be long periods of time

Some claim that because the seventh day (Genesis 2:2, 3) did not have the ‘evening’ and ‘morning’ demarcation, it must still be continuing; it is a long period of time, so we can regard the other days as long periods also.

Since there was no eighth day of creation, there was no need for an evening and morning to mark off the seventh day from the eighth. Also, evening and morning marked the beginning and end of a day, so if their absence means that the seventh day has not finished, then it has not begun either.

This specious argument is often coupled with the claim that Hebrews 4 says that the seventh day of creation is a long period of time, so the other days could be also. Here is the argument:

“According to this passage [Hebrews 4:4–11], the seventh day of the creation week carries on through the centuries ... the seventh day of Genesis 1 and 2 represents a minimum of several thousand years and a maximum that is open ended (but finite). It seems reasonable to conclude then, given the parallelism of the Genesis creation account, that the first six days may also have been long time periods.”⁴⁰

40. Ross, H., *Creation and Time*, Navpress, Colorado Springs, Colorado, p. 49, 1994.

But Hebrews 4 does *not* say that the seventh day of creation is continuing to the present; it only says God's *rest* is continuing. If someone says on Monday that he rested on Saturday and he is still resting, it would not mean that Saturday has continued through to Monday.

Furthermore, the rest is for those who are in Christ (see vv. 9–11), those who are in the Kingdom of God. In other words, it is a spiritual rest. If the rest being alluded to were a continuation of the seventh day of Creation Week, then *everyone* would be in this rest.

This argument also founders on the rock of Exodus 20:10–11, written by God Himself, where God's seventh day of rest is given as the basis for the Sabbath rest commandment, making it clear that God's day of rest, the seventh day, was a day like the other six days of the Creation Week. It would be a strange *week* where the seventh day had not finished yet.⁴¹

6. Genesis is poetry/figurative, a theological argument (polemic) and so is not history (the Framework Hypothesis)

This is the basis of the 'framework hypothesis', probably the favourite view among seminaries that say they accept biblical authority but not six ordinary days of creation.

It is strange, if the literary framework were the true meaning of the text, that no-one interpreted Genesis this way until Arie Noordtzi in 1924. Actually it's not so strange, because the leading framework exponents, Meredith Kline and Henri Blocher, admitted that their rationale for a bizarre, novel interpretation was a desperation to fit the Bible into the alleged 'facts' of science, which no Bible scholar had thought of until the 20th century.

For example, Kline admitted in his major framework article, "To rebut the literalist interpretation of the Genesis creation 'week' propounded by the young-earth theorists is a central concern of this article."⁴² And Blocher said, "This hypothesis overcomes a number of problems that plagued the commentators [including] the confrontation with the scientific vision of the most distant past." And he further admits that he rejects the plain teaching of Scripture because, "The rejection of all the theories accepted by the scientists requires considerable bravado." Clearly, the framework idea did not come from trying to understand Genesis, but from trying to counter the view, held by scholar and layman alike for 2,000 years, that Genesis records real events in real space and time.⁴³

41. Anon, Is the seventh day an eternal day? *Creation* 21(3):44–45, 1999; creation.com/seventhday.

42. Kline, M.G., Space and time in the Genesis cosmology, *Perspectives on Science & Christian Faith* 48(1):2–15, 1996.

43. For critiques of the Framework Hypothesis, see creation.com/framework.

(a) Are the Genesis 1 days real history?

However, as shown above, Genesis is, without any doubt whatsoever, most definitely written as historical narrative. Advocates argue that because Genesis 2 is (they say) arranged topically rather than chronologically, so is Genesis 1. So the days are ‘figurative’ rather than real days. But this is like arguing that because the Gospel of Matthew is arranged topically, then the Gospel of Luke is not arranged chronologically. And, as we have pointed out above (point 2), it is logical (and in line with ancient near eastern literary practice) to have a historical overview (Chapter 1) preceding a recap of the details (Chapter 2) about certain events already mentioned. Chapter 2 does not have the numbered sequence of days that chapter 1 has, so how can it determine how we view Chapter 1?

(b) Are there triads of days?

One of the supposed major ‘evidences’ for a poetic structure is an alleged two triads of days. In this view, Moses arranged the days in a very stylized framework with days 4–6 paralleling days 1–3. Kline suggests that Days 1–3 refer to the Kingdom, and Days 4–6 to the Rulers, as per the following table:⁴⁴

Table 1. A framework idea, which fails scrutiny (see text)

Days of Kingdom		Days of Rulers	
Day 1	Light and darkness	Day 4	Sun, moon, and stars (luminaries)
Day 2	Sky and waters separated	Day 5	Fish and birds
Day 3	Dry land and seas separated, plants and trees	Day 6	Animals and man

But even if this is true, it would not rule out a historical sequence—surely God is capable of creating in a certain order to teach certain truths. Also, other theologians argue that the ‘literary devices’ are more in the imagination of the proponents than the text. For example, the parallels of these two triads of days are vastly overdrawn. Systematic theologian Dr Wayne Grudem summarizes:

“First, the proposed correspondence between the days of creation is not nearly as exact as its advocates have supposed. The sun, moon, and stars created on the fourth day as ‘lights in the firmament of the heavens’ (Gen.1:14) are placed not in any space created on Day 1 but in the ‘firmament’... that was created on the second day. In fact, the correspondence in language is quite explicit: this ‘firmament’ is not mentioned at all on Day 1 but five times on Day 2 (Gen.1:6–8)

44. Kline, 1996.

and three times on Day 4 (Gen. 1:14–19). Of course Day 4 also has correspondences with Day 1 (in terms of day and night, light and darkness), but if we say that the second three days show the creation of things to fill the forms or spaces created on the first three days (or to rule the kingdoms as Kline says), then Day 4 overlaps at least as much with Day 2 as it does with Day 1.

“Moreover, the parallel between Days 2 and 5 is not exact, because in some ways the preparation of a space for the fish and birds of Day 5 does not come in Day 2 but in Day 3. It is not until Day 3 that God gathers the waters together and calls them ‘seas’ (Gen. 1:10), and on Day 5 the fish are commanded to ‘fill the waters in the seas’ (Gen. 1:22). Again in verses 26 and 28 the fish are called ‘fish of the sea’, giving repeated emphasis to the fact that the sphere the fish inhabit was specifically formed on Day 3. Thus, the fish formed on Day 5 seem to belong much more to the place prepared for them on Day 3 than to the widely dispersed waters below the firmament on Day 2. Establishing a parallel between Day 2 and Day 5 faces further difficulties in that nothing is created on Day 5 to inhabit the ‘waters above the firmament’, and the flying things created on this day (the Hebrew word would include flying insects as well as birds) not only fly in the sky created on Day 2, but also live and multiply on the ‘earth’ or ‘dry land’ created on Day 3. (Note God’s command on Day 5: ‘Let birds multiply on the earth’ [Gen. 1:22].)

“Finally, the parallel between Days 3 and 6 is not precise, for nothing is created on Day 6 to fill the seas that were gathered together on Day 3. With all of these points of imprecise correspondence and overlapping between places and things created to fill them, the supposed literary ‘framework,’ while having an initial appearance of neatness, turns out to be less and less convincing upon closer reading of the text.”⁴⁵

(c) Genesis 2:5 teaches that normal providence was used?

Another key argument by framework proponents is based on Genesis 2:5.⁴⁶ Kline rightly states that God did not make plants before Earth had rain or a man, although this is talking about *cultivated* plants not all

45. Grudem, W., *Systematic Theology*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, p. 302, 1994.

46. Kline, M.G., Because it had not rained, *Westminster Theological Journal* 20:146–157, 1958.

plants.⁴⁷ So, Kline asks, what's to stop God making them anyway because He could miraculously sustain them? The answer, according to Kline, is that God was working by ordinary providence:

“The unargued presupposition of Gen. 2:5 is clearly that the divine providence was operating during the creation period through processes which any reader would recognize as normal in the natural world of his day.”⁴⁸

Note that Kline admits that this alleged presupposition is *not* argued in the text. This would explain why no exegete saw this for thousands of years. Then he makes another amazing leap to say that there was ordinary providence operating throughout Creation Week:

“Embedded in Genesis 2:5 ff. is the principle that the *modus operandi* of the divine providence was the same during the creation period as that of ordinary providence at the present time.”⁴⁹

But this is desperation. Even if normal providence were operating, it would not follow that miracles were *not*. In fact, there is no miracle in the Bible that does *not* operate in the midst of normal providence. Michael Horton points out that those who reject God acting in the normal course of events do it from an *a priori* philosophical assumption and not from anything in the text.⁵⁰

A miracle is properly understood not as a ‘violation’ of providence but an *addition*. So when Jesus turned water into wine (John 2), the other aspects of ‘providence’ were still operating. Perhaps Jesus created the dazzling variety of organic compounds in the water to make the wine, but gravity still held the liquid in the barrels, taste buds were still working in the guests, their hearts pumped blood without skipping a beat, etc.

Ironically, if we assume the evolutionary timespans that Kline’s notion is meant to accommodate, Genesis 2:5 actually argues *against* normal providence. In the evolutionary scenario, there are billions of years between the appearance of the oceans and the first plants on land. Note that the verse indicates that the reason why “*no plant of the field had yet sprung up*” was that “*God had not caused it to rain upon the earth*”. I.e. there had not been any rain prior to the appearance of land

47. Kruger, M.J., An understanding of Genesis 2:5. *Journal of Creation* 11(1):106–110, 1997; creation.com/Gen2_5.

48. Kline, 1958, p. 150.

49. Kline, 1958, p. 151.

50. Horton, M.S., *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama*, Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

plants. Given the normal providential operation of evaporation and precipitation, etc., how could there have been no rainfall on the earth in all that vast stretch of time? Such would have been hugely miraculous!

So, in conclusion, Kline incorrectly presupposes normal providence as God's sole *modus operandi* for Genesis 2:5, wildly extrapolates it to the entire Creation Week, and further presumes that normal providence excludes miracles. This error is compounded by failing to note the narrow focus of Genesis 2 on man in the Garden.

(d) Is Genesis merely a theological argument (polemic)?

While Genesis 1 certainly refutes various errant ideas about God, it refutes those ideas precisely because of the real events. For example, it has an implied argument against sun worship *because* God actually created light (Day 1), before He created the sun (Day 4). The contention depends on the historicity of the events.

Is Genesis 1 an argument for the Sabbath? Exodus 20:10–11, which clearly teaches the Sabbath commandment, cites the historical events of Genesis 1 as the basis for the commandment. That is, the works of God recorded in Genesis presage the commandment. The *history* forms the basis of the commandment.

The writings of the framework advocates are marked by lack of clarity. Take a statement by Blocher, for example: 'It [the framework idea] recognizes ordinary days but takes them in the context of one large figurative whole.'⁵¹ But, cutting through the verbal fog, what they really mean is that they deny that the days occurred in real space-time history.

About the only thing that gives any logical coherence to their views is a clear opposition to the calendar-day understanding of Genesis.

7. God's days not our days?

A few have argued that the days of Genesis 1 are 'God's days' and so we should not worry about taking it literally (i.e. as history).

This idea, which sounds superficially pious, if applied consistently, would make understanding any of the Bible an impossible task. God inspired the Bible's words so that we descendants of Adam could understand the things that God would have us know (about salvation, etc.). That means that the words convey God's thoughts *to us*. If any words have meanings that only God understands, then what is the point of having them in the Bible? Perhaps 'murder' or 'adultery' are 'God words' that do not mean what we understand them to mean—obviously a preposterous idea.

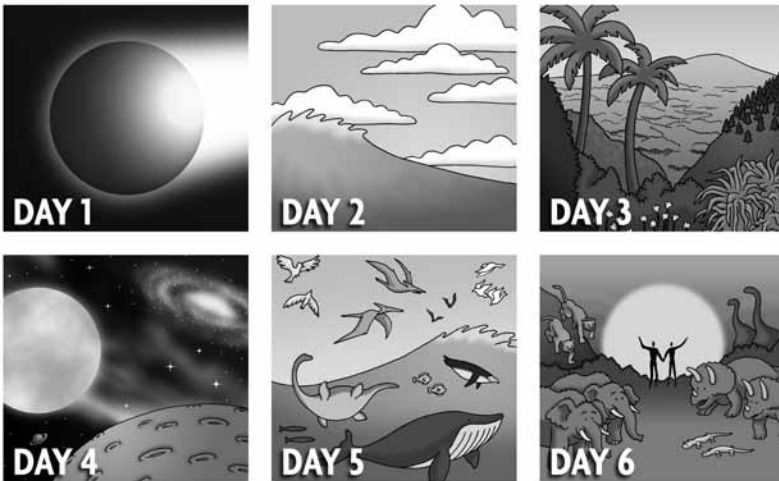
51. Blocher, H. *In the Beginning*, IVP, Downers Grove, US, p. 50, 1984.

In any case, since God is eternal and is outside of time, as we have discussed earlier, what would ‘God’s day’ be; what would it mean? God does not have days and years (see the earlier discussion of 2 Peter 3:8).

8. Days of revelation?

Yet another attempt to get away from the plain, intended meaning of Genesis 1 is to claim that the days mentioned were the days during which God revealed the creation account to Moses (or someone else). But nowhere does the text give any hint that God is *revealing* things on the days. Proponents of this view try to argue that the Hebrew translated as ‘made’ (*asah*) can mean ‘revealed’ or ‘showed’. The Hebrew clearly says that God created (Hebrew: *bara*) or made (*asah*) things, not that He revealed them. *Asah* has a broader meaning than *bara*, covering ‘to make, manufacture, produce, do’ etc., but not ‘to show’ in the sense of reveal.⁵² Where *asah* is translated as ‘show’—for example, “*show kindness*” (Gen. 24:12), it is in the sense of ‘to do’, or ‘make’, kindness.

Again, Exodus 20:11 emphasizes that the *whole creation process* occurred in the timeframe of an ‘ordinary’ week.



Only creation in six Earth-rotation days, as per Genesis chapter 1 and Exodus 20:11, makes sense of the rest of the Bible, allowing for death and suffering only after Adam sinned, thus upholding the goodness of God (theodicy), the foundations of the Gospel (soteriology) and teaching regarding a new heavens and earth (eschatology).

52. Nothing in the standard Gesenius’ *Lexicon* supports the interpretation of *asah* as ‘show’. See Taylor, C.V., *Revelation or creation?* creation.com/showdays, 1997.

Other problems with long-age interpretations

1. The order of events

Attempts to stretch the timeframe of Genesis 1 by making the days into eras of Earth history fail to accommodate the millions of years anyway—the order of creation contradicts the order claimed by the very same secular historical ‘science’ that is being accommodated (see table).

Table 2. Some contradictions between the order of creation in the Bible and evolution/long ages

Bible account of creation	Evolution/long-age speculation
Earth before the sun and stars	Stars and sun before Earth
Earth covered in water initially	Earth a molten blob initially
Oceans first, then dry land	Dry land, then the oceans
Life first created on the land	Life started in the oceans
Plants created before the sun	Plants came long after the sun
Fish and birds created together	Fish formed long before birds
Land animals created after birds	Land animals before whales
Man and dinosaurs lived together	Dinosaurs died out long before man appeared

2. What pollinated the plants?

The plants were created on Day 3, but the pollinators were not created until Day 5 or Day 6. If these days were eras of hundreds of millions of years or more, what pollinated the plants to ensure their survival? Some plants have intricate symbiotic relationships with their pollinators—for example, the yucca plant and its moth pollinator.

3. Adam’s age

God created Adam on Day 6. Adam lived through Day 7 and died at an age of 930 years (Genesis 5:5). If each day were an era of time, even (only) thousands of years, or the seventh day was still continuing, it would make no sense of Adam’s age at death.

Conclusion

This is a question of authority: is historical ‘science’ or Scripture the authority? For those who

- a) regard Scripture (the Word of God) as the ultimate authority, and
- b) take the historical roots of the Gospel seriously, with the reality of Adam and the Fall affecting the created order, belief in six ‘ordinary’ days is the only logically consistent position to take.

Attempts to disconnect Genesis from the real history of the universe end up making Christianity into an ‘upper storey’ irrelevance, where ‘faith’ is seen as little more than a virus of the mind, or an exercise in wishful thinking, like believing in fairies at the bottom of the garden. Over 100 years ago, Scottish theologian James Denney prophetically said,

“The separation of the religious and the scientific means in the end the separation of the religious and the true; and this means that religion dies among true men.”

That has happened to a large extent in much of the once-Christian ‘West’—it has lost its spiritual and moral moorings following capitulation to the billions-of-years foundation of cosmic, geological and biological evolution. The various re-interpretations of Genesis discussed in this chapter have contributed to that capitulation.