

HOW SHORT AN EVENING AND MORNING?

Dear Editor,

I have some words of response for Dr Helweg's reply (pp. 304-306). Though I believe that my initial response to his work was not offered in an attacking or vitriolic spirit, I sense that he may nonetheless have been offended. I mean him no ill will. On the other hand, I believe that his response to my work demands another perspective.

Concerning my opening paragraph about **Facts and Faith** declining to publish my article, it was not offered initially as an article, but rather as a letter to the editor. My view, though somewhat technical was probably no more so than his original, and came to differing conclusions. My 'hypothesis' (to paraphrase Helweg's words in his response) that they declined to publish a letter to the editor which disagreed with their position, I think is sound reasoning.

On his second point of response, about the poetic/prosaic genre of Genesis 1, I still stand by the fact that though the less than 25 year old NIV adopts a poetic-like format, Hebrew versions dating back to before Christ (Dead Sea Scrolls, for example), and every other language version of which I am aware, do not adopt such an indented poetic format. Are the editors of the NIV (with many of whom I am personally acquainted) to outweigh centuries of Biblical understanding and countless numbers of scholars? The fact remains that even though Moses admittedly had been influenced by Egyptian education (Acts 7:22), he wrote in Hebrew with Hebrew grammar and syntax and using Hebrew genres (this assuming that Moses wrote Genesis: the Bible nowhere states clearly that he did so, though it does affirm that he wrote significant portions of Exodus through Deuteronomy, liberal source critics

notwithstanding). The fact remains as well that the Hebrews would not have understood the section as poetic for the reasons I introduced in my original letter. One might consider the views of P. J. Wiseman and R. K. Harrison, that Genesis consists not of the words of Moses, but those of others from Adam to perhaps Joseph written on tablets long before and introduced by the phrase 'these are the generations of'. If this is the case, then the education of Moses in Egypt would be a moot point.

As to his next point concerning the temporal use of בַּיּוֹם (*b'yôm*), I'm not sure which editions of the 11 versions Dr Helweg checked, but I list in Table I the verses and the versional translations to which I had referred in my original letter to **Facts and Faith**.

Now, the reader can see for himself/herself that indeed some versions do translate the Hebrew בַּיּוֹם as variously 'when' or 'in the day'.¹ Helweg has just stated that he searched 11 versions (naming in a note five of the six I have used below) for this and could not find any which translated *b'yôm* as 'when' (one wonders why he did not appeal to the NIV here after his appeal to its poetic format of Genesis 1!). His words were '*All of them translate בַּיּוֹם as "in the day".*'

This appears to me, at best, that Dr Helweg has a badly constructed concordance programme, or at worst, that he has not done his homework as he claims.

Further research into the matter of *b'yôm* has led me to the Hebrew Lexicon by Koehler-Baumgartner, p. 373, which does indeed affirm the meaning of 'when' for several passages, including Genesis 2:17 and Genesis 21:8. The editors of NIV, RSV, NRSV, and NAB have confirmed my point as well. Helweg has made a statement which reflects either glaringly incomplete research or a conscious attempt to deceive the readers into thinking that I was incompetent in my own research, implying that I (and the young-Earth position) am not to be trusted. The reader may search the versions for him/herself to decide who is correct here.

As to יוֹם referring to a literal 24-hour day in Genesis 1, a point not brought out previously (since I did not think it necessary for the purposes of the original response) is that with ordinal numbers (second, third, fourth, etc.), the word יוֹם always refers to a 24-hour day in Scripture, with only one exception. The one exception is in Hosea 6:2, a poetical format in which the numbers 2 and 3 are paralleled in

REFERENCE/ VERSION	NIV	NASV	KJV	RSV/ NRSV	NAB
Genesis 2:4	'when'	'in the day'	'in the day'	'in the day'	'at the time'
Genesis 2:17	'when'	'in the day'	'in the day'	'in the day'	'the moment'
Genesis 3:5	'when'	'in the day'	'in the day'	'when'	'the moment'
Genesis 5:1	'when'	'in the day'	'in the day'	'when'	'when'
Genesis 5:2	'when'	'in the day'	'in the day'	'when'	'when'
Genesis 21:8	'on the day'	'on the day'	'same day'	'on the day'	'on the day'
Genesis 35:3	'in the day'	'in the day'	'in the day'	'in the day'	'in my hour'
Exodus 10:28	'the day'	'in the day'	'in the day'	'in the day'	'the day'

Table 1. Verses containing בַּיּוֹם (*b'yôm*) and how it is translated in some of the different English versions.

the common Semitic x//x+ 1 formula.

On the point of the use of 'evening and morning', Helweg's original article seems to have suggested that the use of the terms in Daniel 8:26 supported its use in Genesis as other than 24-hour periods. My original point was that the use in Daniel 8:14 (an antecedent reference to Daniel 8:26) as actual 24-hour days seems to point to the use of 'evening and morning' as 24-hour days in Daniel 8:26. In his response to my article, he states:

I would further argue that my thesis is strengthened precisely because the Daniel 8:26 passage does refer to Daniel 8:14 where the phrase is prefixed by 2300. That is, the phrase may refer to 24-hour days or a long period of 24-hour days.'

I have to admit to some confusion here, since I am not sure what he means by 'evening and morning' referring to a 'long period of 24-hour days'. My original point had been that Daniel 8:26

'cannot be used to argue against the meaning of a 24-hour day for "evening and morning" in Genesis 1.'

Another point which I should like to make about Helweg's response is that he seems to have claimed in the next-to-last paragraph to have superior cultural experience:

'Having lived in the Middle East for over 10 years, I can see, perhaps better than most, that we, in the "West" tend to read the Bible from our narrow cultural perspective. It is one thing to study the Greek and Hebrew languages, but it is quite another to understand the culture in which these words were given.'

I seriously doubt that the culture of the Middle East today is the same as the culture of the time of Moses. The study of ancient cultures with the ancient languages will lead to a better understanding of the original intention of the author than will the life experience of one with many years in the modern culture of the same region.

On the final point, that of the

simple meaning of Scripture, I agree with Dr Helweg's appeal to II Timothy 2:15. However, it is amazing to me that every other term of Genesis 1 is understood simply by both progressive creationists and by young-Earthers. Why is day to be reinterpreted when other terms such as Sun, Moon, stars, months, years, seasons, sea, dry land, birds, beasts, and man are not?

David M. Fouts,
Dayton, Tennessee,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

FOOTNOTE

1. My original quote at this point was: *'Similar constructions are found in Genesis 2:17, 3:5, 5:1, 5:2, 21:8, 35:3; and Exodus 10:28 to name a few. English versions will vary between "in the day" and "when " in these instances. To negate the meaning of yôm as a 24-hour day in chapter 1 using b'yôm in Genesis 2:4 is at best an imprecise argument.'*

THE FLOOD/POST-FLOOD BOUNDARY

Dear Editor,

I thank Mr Johnston for reading through my lengthy paper¹ on the Flood/post-Flood boundary and his acknowledgment that the detailed analysis and modelling exercises I provide are a *tour de force*.² I am also pleased that he, who has been involved with statistical analysis and mathematical modelling, did not cite one mathematical error³ or correct one of my quantitative evaluations.

At the close of my paper I stated *'the thoughts of readers with insight into alternate interpretations with quantitative assessments of the evidences are invited'*.

Unfortunately, Mr Johnston did not provide one quantitative assessment. His critique is lacking in the use of numbers. No comparison with written records and ice core records was attempted. He provided no study of

the climatic impact of post-Flood catastrophism. He made no attempt to test his own assumptions or the model he advocates. When I subject his criticisms to detailed analysis and quantitatively evaluate them I can find no substance.

Assumptions and Catastrophism

Perhaps I did not make my motivation clear enough in the paper. At the beginning of my research I was not committed to any particular stratigraphic location in the geologic column for the Flood/post-Flood boundary. I only wanted to determine rigorously where the boundary was located no matter what the answer might be, I did lean toward a K/T boundary but was not committed to it. During my research I changed my mind because of the weight of the evidence. The conclusion that the boundary is in the mid to late Pleistocene is based solely on the united consensus of numerous evidences of global proportions and supported by strong Biblical constraints. Even now, I have no personal attachment to the mid-Pleistocene placement of the boundary advocated in my paper. However, I do have attachment to testing hypotheses and subjecting them to careful scrutiny and quantitative analysis.

The assumptions in my analysis and modelling were the Biblical record, other historical records, a post-Flood Ice Age and its ice core records, and the geological record (all interpreted within a global Genesis Flood and young Earth paradigm). Maximising catastrophism within these constraints was discussed at length in my paper and is summarised for the readers in a section below. If I could have honestly invoked a greater level of catastrophism I would have.

Unfortunately, Mr Johnston in expressing his dissatisfaction with my 'assumptions' confuses assumptions with conclusions. The Biblical accounts, historical accounts, geological record — the Holocene, and ice core records (which are the