

# A VIEW OF CREATION

By Ashby L. Camp

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The following is an explanation and defense of my understanding of the Genesis creation account. I offer it for those who might care to know why I believe what I believe. If it helps anyone to think through some of the issues or to see anything more clearly, I will be pleased.

I have not always held my present understanding. For a large part of my Christian life, I approached this account asking what I could make it mean rather than asking what the author intended it to mean. That was not an easy thing to admit to myself. From the time of my conversion I accepted that Scripture was the word of God, so I realized that to force an interpretation onto a text was to misrepresent God, a grave matter indeed. I was sensitive to that concern elsewhere, but when it came to creation, I somehow rationalized the procedure. Over time, however, my conscience grew uneasy.

My epiphany came when, in an effort to harmonize Scripture with current scientific orthodoxy, I found myself seriously contemplating the possibility that the early chapters of Genesis were referring to two Adams separated by eons. I was struck with the realization that such rank eisegesis is a sophisticated form of unbelief. My study since that humbling experience has led me to the understanding given here.

This is not to suggest that everyone who disagrees with me is guilty of improper methodology. Some who are committed to letting the Bible speak simply weigh the exegetical arguments differently. I do believe, however, that many are where I was. They are preaching that the Bible is the inerrant word of God and at the same time, perhaps without realizing it, are treating the creation texts as something to be molded rather than read. When Scripture is handled that way, the word of man masquerades as the word of God.

Young's reminder is ever timely:

It is of course true that the Bible is not a textbook of science, but all too often, it would seem, this fact is made a pretext for treating lightly the content of Genesis one. Inasmuch as the Bible is the Word of God, whenever it speaks on any subject, whatever that subject may be, it is accurate in what it says.<sup>1</sup>

I present my understanding by paraphrasing (in bold type) the various sections of the creation account. These paraphrases are followed by a discussion of select issues. I

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<sup>1</sup> Edward J. Young, "The Days of Genesis First Article," *Westminster Theological Journal* 25 (November 1962), 1.

note briefly in an appendix what I believe Scripture teaches about the age of mankind, which, under my view, is essentially the same as the age of creation.

**GEN. 1:1-2 – In the beginning God created everything over the course of six actual days. As initially created from nothing, the earth was formlessness and emptiness; and darkness was over the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.**

This paraphrase reflects the traditional understanding of Gen. 1:1 as an independent clause rather than a temporal clause. It is so translated in the AV, NASB, NIV, NKJV, REB, NJB, and ESV. Collins offers the following succinct justification:

As we begin reading the Hebrew, we must decide what is the meaning of v. 1. Is it "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," or "when God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . ."? Now the accents in the Hebrew text certainly favor the first (and more traditional rendering); and this reading is reflected not only in the Septuagint but also in the way the verse is applied in John 1:1. Indeed, since the Biblical writers do have a doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* (cf. Isaiah 40:26; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11), and they could not have got it with the second reading, I do not see how there is much warrant for that second reading.<sup>2</sup>

The phrase "the heavens and the earth" (*hasšamayim we'et ha'areš*) almost certainly is an expression (known as a merism) signifying the totality of creation.<sup>3</sup> Thus, 1:1 is a declaration that in the beginning God created *everything*, the

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<sup>2</sup> C. John Collins, "Reading Genesis 1:1-2:3 as an Act of Communication: Discourse Analysis and Literal Interpretation," in *Did God Create in Six Days?* ed. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall (Taylors, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1999), 134. For a fuller and more technical defense of the traditional rendering, see Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 103-107; John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 21-23; and Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1a (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 136-139.

<sup>3</sup> This is recognized across a broad theological spectrum. See, for example, C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament Vol. 1*, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), 47; John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910), 14; E. J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1964), 9; Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 2:104; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, rev. ed., trans. John H. Marks (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 48; R. K. Harrison, "Creation," in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. M. C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975) 1:1022; Bruce K. Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 - Part III: The Initial Chaos Theory and the Precreation Chaos Theory," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132 (July 1975), 218; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, trans. John J. Scullion, A Continental Commentary, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 101; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 15; Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 106; Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 5; Hamilton, 103 (n. 2); Sailhamer (1990), 23; John D.

totality of all that exists.<sup>4</sup> This includes both the completed universe and the material from which it was fashioned.

Based on its use elsewhere in Scripture, a number of commentators believe "the heavens and the earth" denotes only the completed universe and says nothing about the origin of the material from which it was fashioned.<sup>5</sup> But if, as Wenham asserts,<sup>6</sup> the chief thrust of the phrase is totality rather than organization, its use in Gen. 1:1 encompasses the material as well as the form. Thus, Keil and Delitzsch state that in Gen. 1:1 "the existence of any primeval material is precluded by the object created: 'the heavens and the earth.' . . . [I]f in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, 'there is nothing belonging to the composition of the universe, either in material or form, which had an existence out of God prior to this divine act in the beginning' (*Delitzsch*)."<sup>7</sup>

Many scholars have repeated the point. For example, Barkley writes, "The fact of God's sovereign creation *ex nihilo* ('out of nothing') is the clearest biblical teaching. There is no eternal matter or eternal evil spirit. The sun is a mere creature, not a god. Gn. 1:1 includes the whole of reality, including time, as God's creation. This key truth has far wider importance than is always realized."<sup>8</sup>

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Currid, "An Examination of the Egyptian Background of the Genesis Cosmology," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 35 (1991), 31; Paul K. Jewett, *God Creation, and Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 457; Mathews, 129; Douglas F. Kelly, *Creation and Change* (Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1997), 45, 79.

<sup>4</sup> Sarna (p. 5) paraphrases the merism as "the totality of cosmic phenomena," Kelly (p. 45) as "everything that exists," von Rad (p. 48) as "absolutely everything," and Wenham (p. 15) simply as "everything." Sailhamer writes in *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1996), 56:

By linking these two extremes into a single expression – "sky and land" or "heavens and earth" – the Hebrew language expresses the totality of all that exists. Unlike English, Hebrew doesn't have a single word to express the concept of "the universe"; it must do so by means of a merism. The expression "sky and land" thus stands for the "entirety of the universe." It includes not only the two extremes, heaven and earth, but also all that they contain – the sun, the moon, and the stars; every seen and unseen part of the universe; the seas, the dry land, and the plants and animals that inhabit them.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Waltke (1975) (p. 218-219), citing Childs and Skinner for the proposition that the phrase means only the "orderly world" or "organized universe," asks Plessis's question, "If the heavens and earth signified the organized universe how, then, can it denote heaven and earth in a formless state?" See also, Westermann (p. 95).

<sup>6</sup> Wenham, 15; see also, Mathews, 142. In that case, Waltke, through his quote of Plessis (see prior note), is asking the wrong question. The right question is: "If 'the heavens and the earth' signifies absolutely everything, how can it not include the material from which the completed universe was fashioned?"

<sup>7</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, 47. They add (p. 47-48), "This is also shown in the connection between [v. 1] and the one which follows: '*and the earth was without form and void,*' not before, but when, or after God created it. From this it is evident that the void and formless state of the earth was not uncreated, or without beginning."

<sup>8</sup> O. R. Barclay, "Creation," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson and David Wright (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 177.

Grudem writes, "[Creation *ex nihilo*] means that before God began to create the universe, nothing else existed except God himself. This is the implication of Genesis 1:1, which says, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' The phrase 'the heavens and the earth' includes the entire universe."<sup>9</sup>

Copan writes, "The fact that 'heaven and earth' is a merism signifying 'the totality of cosmic phenomena' points us toward an absolute beginning of the universe – including matter."<sup>10</sup> Mathews writes, "Since v. 1 clearly indicates that God created everything that we know as the universe, the 'earth' (v. 2) had its origins ultimately in God."<sup>11</sup> Feinberg writes, "[Gen. 1:1] says he created the heavens and the earth, a typical Hebrew way to refer to all there is. But if in the beginning God created everything, nothing could have existed before Gen 1:1 from which to make the heavens and the earth."<sup>12</sup>

The implication of *creatio ex nihilo* that arises from the all-encompassing scope of "the heavens and the earth" is reinforced by the theological tenor of the account. As Childs observed, there is an effort by the writer, in contrast to the cosmogonies prevailing in antiquity, "to emphasize the absolute transcendence of God over his material."<sup>13</sup> Mathews explains:

Regardless of how one reads 1:1-3, there is no room in our author's cosmology for co-eternal matter with God when we consider the theology of the creation account in its totality. The ancient cosmogonies characteristically attributed the origins of the creator-god to some pre-existing matter (usually primeval waters) makes the absence of such description in Genesis distinctive. Verse 1 declares that God exists outside time and space; all that exists is dependent on his independent will. We conclude that v. 1 is best taken as an absolute statement of God's creation.<sup>14</sup>

The notion of *creatio ex nihilo* furthermore is reasonably derived from the passage when we consider the polemical undertones of chap. 1, which distances Israel's view of cosmogony from the ancient opinion that there

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<sup>9</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 262-263.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Copan, "Is Creatio Ex Nihilo A Post-Biblical Invention? An Examination of Gerhard May's Proposal," *Trinity Journal* 17:1 (spring 1996), 88 (n. 51). Also, Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, "Craftsman or Creator?" in *The New Mormon Challenge*, ed. Francis Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 111.

<sup>11</sup> Mathews, 143.

<sup>12</sup> John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 554.

<sup>13</sup> B. S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1960), 32.

<sup>14</sup> Mathews, 139.

once existed primordial forces that were the source of the creator-god. In biblical religion God has no antecedents, no companions, and no antagonists. As in the case with the subsequent creative events (vv. 3-31), the origin of the "earth" in vv. 1-2 can be attributed to divine fiat that is best reckoned with the first day.<sup>15</sup>

As noted in the opening quote from Collins, later biblical writers clearly have a doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. There is little doubt, for example, that Rom. 4:17b refers to *creatio ex nihilo*.<sup>16</sup> The doctrine is also present in various extra-biblical Jewish and Christian writings.<sup>17</sup> If Genesis 1, the foundational text on creation, assumes the preexistence of matter, it is hard to imagine how *creatio ex nihilo* could have gotten established.

Some commentators view Gen. 1:2 as a description of something ominous and wrong, a "chaos" that is contrary to God's good creation, and thus reject the implication of 1:1 that the earth as described in v. 2 was created by God.<sup>18</sup> They claim that 1:1 refers not to the beginning of all things but only to the beginning of the shaping of the cosmos from the preexistent chaos of v. 2. This not only restricts unduly the scope of "the heavens and the earth" and fails to give sufficient weight to the opening word "In the beginning,"<sup>19</sup> it also reads into v. 2 a dubious negativity. Tsumura writes:

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<sup>15</sup> Mathews, 144. Young agrees that the origin of the "earth" in vv.1-2 is best reckoned with the first day: "Although the beginning of the first day is not mentioned in Genesis one, it would seem from Exodus 20:11 that it began with the absolute creation, the very beginning." E. J. Young, "The Days of Genesis Second Article," *Westminster Theological Journal* 25 (May 1963), 153.

<sup>16</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 1:244, states, "There is little doubt that the reference is to God's *creatio ex nihilo*." James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1988), 218, states:

Both elements of the formulation [in Rom. 4:17b] are firmly rooted in Jewish thought: the idea of God's act of creation as an effective 'calling' (Isa 41:4; 48:13; Wisd Sol 11:25; Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 4.187; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 21.4; *Jos. As.* 8.9) and the belief that God created 'out of nothing,' *creatio ex nihilo* (2 Macc 7:28; *Jos. As.* 12.2; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 21.4; 48.8; 2 *Enoch* 24:2; *Ap. Const.* 8.12.7) – a particular feature of Philo's theology, for whom God is toV o[n who brings non-being into being [cites omitted]."

Other biblical texts are discussed in Copan, 87-92 and Copan and Craig, 110-118.

<sup>17</sup> See Copan, 84-87; Copan and Craig, 119-126; and Dunn's references in the previous note.

<sup>18</sup> For example, A. Ross states (p. 107): "In the first part of Genesis 1:2, there is thus an ominous, uncomfortable tone. The clauses describe not the results of divine creation but a chaos at the earliest stage of this world. It is not the purpose of Genesis to tell the reader how the chaos came about (any more than it is interested in identifying the serpent in chap. 3)." See also, Waltke (1975), 220-221.

<sup>19</sup> Gerhard Hasel, "Recent Translations of Genesis 1:1: A Critical Look," *The Bible Translator* 22 (1971), 165, states: "It rather appears that the author of Gen. 1 wanted to convey more than to give in vs. 1 merely an introductory summary which expresses as Westermann and others hold that 'God is the creator of heaven

Let us summarize what we have concluded in the above discussion: the term **to,,hu**, means (1) "desert," (2) "a desert-like place," i.e., "a desolate or empty place" or "an uninhabited place" or (3) "emptiness; the phrase **to,,hu, wa,,bo,,hu** has a similar meaning and refers to a state of "aridness or unproductiveness" (Jer 4:23) or "desolation" (Isa 34:11). . . .

In light of the above, it would be very reasonable to understand the phrase **to,,hu, wa,,bo,,hu** in Gen. 1:2 as also describing a state of "unproductiveness and emptiness," though the context suggests that this was the initial state of the created earth rather than a state brought about as a result of God's judgment on the earth or land (cf. Jer. 4:23; Isa 34:11). . . .

In conclusion, both the biblical context and extra-biblical parallels suggest that the phrase **to,,hu, wa,,bo,,hu** in Gen. 1:2 has nothing to do with "chaos" and simply means "emptiness" and refers to the earth which is an empty place, i.e. "an unproductive and uninhabited place." Thus, the main reason for the author's mentioning the earth as **to,,hu, wa,,bo,,hu** in this setting is to inform the audience that the earth is "not yet" the earth as it was known to them.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, Mathews writes:

Moreover, proponents of the title view contend that v. 2 describes a chaotic earth whose elements oppose creation and are not harmonious with God's good creation (cf. Isa 45:18; Rev 21:1,25). But this expects more of the passage than it says. The description of the "earth" is best seen as neutral, if not positive; for elsewhere we learn that God is the Creator of "darkness" (Isa 45:7), and we recognize also that darkness ("evening") was part of the created order the Lord named and deemed "good." As we showed at v. 2, the distinctive couplet **to,,hu, wa,,bo,,hu**, ("formless and empty") portrays an earth that is a sterile wasteland awaiting the creative word of God to make it habitable for human life. This is the point of the prophet's appeal to creation: "he did not create it [the land] to be empty [**to,,hu,**]" (Isa 45:18). In his oracle Isaiah anticipated that the uninhabited Israel will once again know the return of the exilic captives, and, spiritually, the Gentiles who submit to the God of

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and earth.' If the writer of Gen. 1 had wanted to say merely this he would certainly not have needed to begin his sentence **bÿre,,sÇei,tâ.**"

<sup>20</sup> David Toshio Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 83 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 41, 43.

Israel will join Israel in its salvation (Isa 45:14-25). The passage speaks to the purposes of God, who as Creator will achieve his salvific ends for all people. This is borne out by the term parallel to *to,hu*, in v. 18, which shows purpose, "but formed it [the land] to be inhabited." Thus the prophet asserted that the Lord did not create the earth to remain *to,hu*, but rather to become a residence for man. Finally, the three parallel clauses in v. 2's description of the "earth" include the "Spirit of God," who prepares the earth for the creative commands to follow. This suggests that the earth's elements are not portraying a negative picture but rather a neutral, sterile landscape created by God and subject to his protection.<sup>21</sup>

That the creation done by God "in the beginning" includes the work described in vv. 3-31 follows from the all-encompassing scope of "the heavens and the earth." Since the phrase includes *everything*, it necessarily includes the things made in vv. 3-31. So all attempts to separate Gen. 1:1 from the creation week, as though that verse speaks of some earlier beginning, are misguided.<sup>22</sup>

Four facts confirm this conclusion. First, 1:1 and 2:1-3 exhibit a chiastic pattern, the effect of which is to tie the account together, thus linking the creation in vv. 3-31 to

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<sup>21</sup> Mathews, 143. See also, Mark F. Rooker, "Part 1: Genesis 1:1-3: Creation or Re-creation?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149 (July 1992), 320-323 and "Part 2: Genesis 1:1-3: Creation or Re-creation?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149 (October 1992), 420-423.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Sailhamer (1996) claims that vv. 3-31 describe a later work that was restricted to the promised land. Gorman Gray claims in *The Age of the Universe: What Are the Biblical Limits?* (Washougal, WA: Morningstar Publications, 1997) that vv. 3-31 describe a later work involving the entire planet. Classic "gap theorists" claim that vv. 3-31 describe a re-creation following judgment on the pristine world created in 1:1. The impulse of some to separate Gen. 1:1 from vv. 3-31 to allow time for the angelic rebellion to materialize is based on a dubious assumption about the nature of angels. As Duane A. Garrett explains in *Angels and the New Spirituality* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 118, it is possible that

some angels became blessed and the others became devils in the first instance after their creation. That is, God created all angelic beings with fantastic innate powers and knowledge and, in the first moment of their creation, the free will to determine whether to seek their fulfillment in God or in themselves. Their very first act was to decide about God one way or the other, and the decision stuck for all eternity. If that seems unfair, remember that at their creation they already knew more than we will ever know in this lifetime, so they had enough information on which to base a decision.

In this interpretation, the one thing that angels did not have at the moment of creation was the bliss of a direct vision of God in all His glory. They had innate knowledge of God, but not direct knowledge of God. They could attain direct knowledge of God only by His grace; once they had received it, they could never lose it or desire anything else. After the beatific vision, they could never fall into sin. Before that moment, however, they had to decide whether to seek blessedness in God's grace or in their own persons. Being angels, they did not need time to think about their decision. As Aquinas put it, "they were all of them good in the first instant, but in the second the good were set apart from the wicked."

1:1.<sup>23</sup> Second, Gen. 2:4 uses the phrase "the heavens and the earth" in a restatement of the work of creation throughout the six days. Third, Ex. 31:17 says "the heavens and the earth" were made in six days.<sup>24</sup> Fourth, the Lord Jesus places the creation of mankind, which occurred on day six, in "the beginning" (Mat. 19:4; Mk. 10:6).

Thus, Mathews's summary of vv. 1-2 seems sound:

[V]v. 1-2 describe the absolute beginnings, the initial stage in the creation of the "earth" that is brought to completion during the six days (vv. 3-31), climaxing in the consecration of the seventh day (2:1-3). Earth's beginning, we may surmise from the implications of the passage, was created *ex nihilo*. Since v. 1 clearly indicates that God created everything that we know as the universe, the "earth" (v. 2) had its origins ultimately in God.<sup>25</sup>

**GEN. 1:3-5 – God created light and then created the phenomenon of day and night. There was evening and there was morning, the first day.**

By the command of the Almighty, light is called into existence. In the words of Young:

After the statement of creation in verse one, the first divine act mentioned is the command, "let there be light." The conditions existing at the time when this command was uttered were those set forth in the second verse of the chapter. Against the dark background described in verse two the light shone forth. As a result of God's speaking, the light

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<sup>23</sup> Wenham observes (p. 5):

2:1-3 echoes 1:1 by introducing the same phrases but in reverse order: "he created," "God," "heavens and earth" reappear as "heavens and earth" (2:1) "God" (2:2), "created" (2:3). This chiasmic pattern brings the section to a neat close which is reinforced by the inclusion "God created" linking 1:1 and 2:3.

<sup>24</sup> Ex. 20:11 is similar, but since it has the additional phrase "the sea, and all that is in them," the parallel is less exact. But contra Sailhamer (1996), 106-107, the tripartite expression, "heaven-earth-sea(s)," simply is an alternate way of "referring to the entire universe." David Toshio Tsumura, "<y]m^v\*," in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis CD-ROM*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> Mathews, 143. Similarly, Young, while recognizing that there is no explicit statement of the creation of the primeval material from which the universe we know was formed, concluded, "Verse two describes the earth as it came from the hands of the Creator and as it existed at the time when God commanded the light to shine forth." E. J. Young, "The Relationship of the First Verse of Genesis One to Verses Two and Three," *Westminster Theological Journal* 21 (May 1959), 146.



sprang into existence. This light is not an emanation from God, nor is it an attribute, but is the result of God's creative Word.<sup>26</sup>

Some balk at the idea of light and the phenomenon of day and night existing before creation of the heavenly bodies, but just as the eschatological light will not have its source in the sun or moon (e.g., Rev. 21:23, 22:5), neither did the light of creation. Hamilton writes:

It will perhaps strike the reader of this story as unusual that its author affirms the existence of light (and a *day* for that matter) without the existence of the sun, which is still three "days" away. The creation of light anticipates the creation of sunlight. Eventually the task of separating the light from the darkness will be assigned to the heavenly luminaries (v. 18). It is unnecessary to explain such a claim as reflecting scientific ignorance. What the author states is that God caused the light to shine from a source other than the sun for the first three "days."<sup>27</sup>

It is unclear whether the author intended the first day<sup>28</sup> to begin with the "evening" (darkness) of v. 2 or the "morning" (light) of v. 3.<sup>29</sup> But even if the latter is

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<sup>26</sup> Young (1963), 153. Likewise, Wenham states (p. 17-18):

Though it is of course taken for granted throughout the OT that God speaks, *rma* "to say" is used here in a more pregnant sense than usual. It is a divine word of command that brings into existence what it expresses. Throughout Scripture the word of God is characteristically both creative and effective: it is the prophetic word that declares the future and helps it come into being. But in this creation narrative these qualities of the divine word are even more apparent (cf. S. Wagner, TDOT 1:336; Westermann, 1:110-12).

<sup>27</sup> Hamilton, 121. Mathews writes (p. 145), "The source of creation's first 'light' is not specifically stated. Since it is not tied to a luminating body such as the sun (vv. 15-16), the text implies that the 'light' has its source in God himself." Terrence E. Fretheim remarks in "The Book of Genesis" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 1:343, "Inasmuch as the sun had not yet been created, this verse probably refers to a divine manipulation of light as a creative act." According to Lewis, "The rabbis had God create a primeval light not dependent on the sun that came into existence at God's command but was later withdrawn and stored up for the righteous in the messianic future." Jack P. Lewis, "The Days of Creation: An Historical Survey of Interpretation," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 32 (December 1989), 449. Sarna states (p. 7), "This source of this supernal, nonsolar light of creation became a subject of rabbinic and mystical speculation. Rabba 3:4 expresses the view that this light is the effulgent splendor of the Divine Presence."

<sup>28</sup> "Hebrew *'ehad* functions both as a cardinal number ('one') and an ordinal number ('first') in many texts." Sarna, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Wenham, for example, favors the former (p. 19):

"There was evening and morning, a first day." This formula closes the account of each day's activity (vv 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; cf. 2:2). Probably the mention of the evening before the morning reflects the Jewish concept that the day begins at dusk, not at dawn. Though

correct, the *ex nihilo* creation of the material of v. 2 still should be considered as taking place on the first day, despite the fact it was done before the appearance of light. In that regard, it is similar to the command "Let there be light," which clearly is included in the work of the first day despite having been uttered in darkness.<sup>30</sup> This, along with the fact the beginning of the first day is not specified in the text, suggests that all the work involved in establishing day and night on earth, including the creation of the earth, should be considered part of day one. Indeed, the creation of the earth, the creation of light, and the division of day and night could have been instantaneous and virtually simultaneous, in which case it all would have occurred essentially "at dawn."

The inclusion in day one of the *ex nihilo* creation of the material of v. 2 is reflected in Ex. 20:11 and 31:17, where the totality of creation is included within the six days. Thus, Young writes, "Although the beginning of the first day is not mentioned in Genesis one, it would seem from Exodus 20:11 that it began with the absolute creation, the very beginning."<sup>31</sup> Mathews states, "As in the case with the subsequent creative events (vv. 3-31), the origin of the 'earth' in vv. 1-2 can be attributed to divine fiat that is best reckoned with the first day."<sup>32</sup>

## DAY-AGE THEORY

The meaning of the term "day" (yo,m) in the Genesis creation account has come under increasing scrutiny over the last two centuries, as the concept of vast ages has made its way into the understanding of earth history. Though a few early Jewish and Christian interpreters allegorized the term, they did so in light of their Greek philosophical views and their understanding from Gen. 1:5 and 2:4 that creation had been instantaneous, not

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the OT may be interpreted to mean that the new day begins at dawn, less difficulties are posed by the evening theory (cf. H. R. Stroes, *VT* 16 [1966] 46-475). On this view, the first day began in darkness (v. 2) and ended, after the creation of light, with nightfall, the start of the second day.

Sailhamer concurs (though he has a different perspective on the overall account): "At the conclusion of the first day of the week the writer says, 'and it was evening and it was morning.' This shows that the beginning of the day was reckoned from the time of the evening darkness. 'And it was morning' describes the sunrise marked by the phrase 'and there was light' in verse 3." Sailhamer (1996), 113. See also, Gerhard F. Hasel, "Day" in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 1:877 and James B. Jordan, *Creation in Six Days* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1999), 203-209. Sarna (p. 8), on the other hand, favors the latter: "As Rashbam noted, the day is here seen to begin with the dawn." So too von Rad (p. 53): "The day here appears to be reckoned from morning to morning, in strange contrast to its reckoning in the cultic law." Keil and Delitzsch state (p. 51): "[T]he days of creation are not reckoned from evening to evening, but from morning to morning." See also, Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part I: From Adam to Noah*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 28-30.

<sup>30</sup> This is apparent from the fact the divine word ("And God said . . .") is the creative act of the other days.

<sup>31</sup> Young (1963), 153.

<sup>32</sup> Mathews, 144.

because they were troubled by the apparent brevity of creation.<sup>33</sup> There is no doubt, however, "that the predominant view at least until the 1700s was that the days of creation were six twenty-four hour days."<sup>34</sup>

The "day-age" theory, the notion that "day" in the Genesis account refers to geological ages, was first proposed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and came to prominence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the writings of two geologists.<sup>35</sup> This view has garnered little support from Hebrew scholars, largely because it suffers from a serious semantic problem. As explained by Collins:

Generally speaking, the Hebrew word *yom* ("day") has several attested senses. In the singular it can designate (1) the period of daylight, (2) a period of 24 hours, and (3) a period of time of unspecified length. To be lexically responsible, we should try to indicate criteria by which a reader would discern one sense or another in a given context. Senses 1 and 2 are fairly easy to discern, in Hebrew as well as in English; that is to say, these are the senses that require the least supporting information from the context. Sense 3 exists in English, too; and we detect it in both languages based on qualifiers such as "day of the Lord," "day of Jerusalem," "day of wrath," "in that day," etc. Such qualifiers are not present here in Genesis 1:1-2:3, so it would be better to find an interpretation that does not rely on sense 3. . . . [W]e may also say that [the day-age] view asks too much harmonization with *modern* scientific theories for us to see its connection with what the *ancient* account was actually for.<sup>36</sup>

More than a century earlier, Dabney made the point this way:

The narrative seems historical and not symbolical; and hence the strong initial presumption is, that all its parts are to be taken in their obvious sense. . . . It is freely admitted that the word day is often used in the Greek Scriptures as well as the Hebrew (as in our common speech) for

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<sup>33</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "The 'Days' of Creation in Genesis 1: Literal 'Days' or Figurative 'Periods/EPOCHS' of Time?" *Origins* 21 (No. 1, 1994), 6-9; Lewis, 433-455; Mathews, 148; Jordan, 17-18.

<sup>34</sup> Feinberg, 597.

<sup>35</sup> Hasel (1994), 32 (n. 14), citing Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 211 and Francis Haber, *The Age of the World: Moses to Darwin* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1959), 122-123, 199-200, 255.

<sup>36</sup> Collins (1999), 147-148. Collins explains (n. 39) why the expression "on the day that" in Genesis 2:4 does not provide evidence for sense 3 being present in the creation account: "The basic issue is the fact that here we have a bound form in an idiom (*bym* + infinitive construct), which cannot give us semantic information about the meaning of *yom* outside this expression."

an epoch, a season, a time. But yet, this use is confessedly derivative. The natural day is its literal and primary meaning. Now, it is apprehended that in construing any document, while we are ready to adopt, at the demand of the context, the derived or tropical meaning, we revert to the primary one, when no such demand exists in the context.<sup>37</sup>

This, coupled with the refrain "there was evening and there was morning" and the references to the days of creation in Ex. 20:11 and 31:17,<sup>38</sup> makes it clear that the author was referring to the normal days with which his readers were familiar. In the words of Hummel:

The meaning of the word *day* must be determined (like any other word with several meanings) by the context and usage of the author. A plain reading of the text, with its recurrent phrase of evening and morning, indicates a solar day of twenty-four hours. That would have been clear to Moses and his first readers. The context gives no connotation of an era or geological age. Creation is pictured in six familiar periods followed by a seventh for rest, corresponding to the days of the week as Israel knew them.<sup>39</sup>

Many eminent Hebraists of diverse theological perspectives concur.<sup>40</sup> For example:

- Keil and Delitzsch write, "But if the days of creation are regulated by the recurring interchange of light and darkness, they must be regarded not as periods of time of incalculable duration, of years or thousands of years, but as simple earthly days."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Robert L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan rep. 1973 [1898]), 254-255.

<sup>38</sup> To those who claim the point of these texts is that our work week should be analogous, but not identical, to God's creation week, Terence E. Fretheim replies in "Were the Days of Creation Twenty-Four Hours Long? Yes" in *The Genesis Debate*, ed. Ronald F. Youngblood (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 19-20:

The references to the days of creation in Exodus 20:11 and 31:17 in connection with the Sabbath law make sense only if understood in terms of a normal seven-day week. It should be noted that the references to creation in Exodus are not used as an analogy – that is, your rest on the seventh day ought to be like God's rest in creation. It is, rather, stated in terms of the imitation of God or a divine precedent that is to be followed: God worked for six days and rested on the seventh, and therefore you should do the same. Unless there is an exactitude of reference, the argument of Exodus does not work.

<sup>39</sup> Charles E. Hummel, *The Galileo Connection* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 214. Hummel views the literal days as figurative analogies to mankind's pattern of work and rest.

<sup>40</sup> This is not to say that all of these scholars accept creation as actually having occurred over six literal days. Some do, but some believe, similar to Hummel, that the literal days are part of a literary scheme that makes a larger figurative point (see later discussion). Others are content with the notion the Bible affirms cultural misconceptions.

- Dods writes, "They are [the Bible's] worst friends who distort its words that they may yield a meaning more in accordance with scientific truth. If, for example, the word 'day' in these chapters does not mean a period of twenty-four hours, the interpretation of Scripture is hopeless."<sup>42</sup>

- Driver writes:

Here and elsewhere the expression 'creation of *man*' has been used designedly in order to leave open the possibility that the 'days' of Gen. i. denote periods. There is however little doubt that the writer really meant 'days' in a literal sense, and that Pearson was right when he inferred from the chapter that the world was represented as created '6000, or at farthest 7000,' years from the 17<sup>th</sup> cent. A.D.<sup>43</sup>

- Gunkel writes, "The 'days' are of course days and nothing else."<sup>44</sup>
- Skinner writes, "The interpretation of *yom* as *aeon*, a favourite resource of harmonists of science and revelation, is opposed to the plain sense of the passage, and has no warrant in Hebrew usage (not even in Ps. 90:4)."<sup>45</sup>
- Leupold writes:

In the interest of accuracy it should be noted that within the confines of this one verse [v. 5] the word 'day' is used in two different senses. "Day" (*yo,m*) over against "night" (*la'ayelah*) must refer to the light part of the day, roughly, a twelve hour period. When the verse concludes with the statement that the first "day" (*yo,m*) is concluded, the term must mean a twenty-four hour period. . . .

There ought to be no need of refuting the idea that *yo,m* means period. Reputable dictionaries like Buhl, B D B or K. W. know nothing of this notion.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, 51.

<sup>42</sup> Marcus Dods, *The Book of Genesis* (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1898), 4.

<sup>43</sup> S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis*, Westminster Commentaries, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Methuen, 1926), xxviii (n. 1).

<sup>44</sup> Hasel (1994), 21, citing Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis übersetzt und erklärt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901), 97.

<sup>45</sup> J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 2d ed., The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1930), 21.

- Cassuto writes, "The intention here . . . is to explain that the two divisions of time known to us as Day and Night are precisely the same as those that God established at the time of creation, the *light* being the Day, and the *darkness* the Night."<sup>47</sup>
- Simpson writes, "There can be no question but that by Day the author meant just what we mean – the time required for one revolution of the earth on its axis."<sup>48</sup>
- Von Rad writes, "The seven days are unquestionably to be understood as actual days and as a unique, unrepeatable lapse of time in this world."<sup>49</sup>

- Davidson writes:

The flexibility in the usage of the word *day* is well illustrated in verse 5. In its first occurrence it means day time as distinct from the darkness of night; in the closing refrain it means the whole twenty-four hour cycle embracing both evening and morning. Attempts to make it still more flexible, to mean aeons or stages in the known evolution of the world, and thus reconcile Genesis 1 with modern scientific theory are misguided.<sup>50</sup>

- Barr writes:

By completely ignoring the literary form of the passage, its emphasis upon the seven-day scheme, and all questions involving the intentions of the writers [the Scofield Bible's interpretation of Gen. 1:1] is as effective a denial of the truth of Genesis as any atheistic writer could produce. The same is true of interpretations which suppose that the seven 'days' of creation are not actual days but long ages, ages of revelation, or the like.<sup>51</sup>

- Wenham writes, "There can be little doubt that here [v. 5] 'day' has its basic sense of a 24-hour period."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1942), 56-57.

<sup>47</sup> Cassuto, 27. He specifies on the following page that "day" of v. 5 is a "calendar day."

<sup>48</sup> Cuthbert A. Simpson and Walter Russell Bowie, "The Book of Genesis" in *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. George A. Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1952), 1:471.

<sup>49</sup> Von Rad, 65. Fretheim (1990) (p. 14) introduces this quote with, "I would agree with Gerhard von Rad."

<sup>50</sup> Robert Davidson, *Genesis 1-11* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 18.

<sup>51</sup> James Barr, *Escaping from Fundamentalism* (London: SCM Press, 1984), 137. The fact Barr opposes "fundamentalism" does not negate his linguistic expertise. One may claim that his bias is overriding his scholarly judgment, but given the theological diversity of those who share his opinion, that is a difficult point to carry.

<sup>52</sup> Wenham, 19.

- Ross writes, "In this chapter, however, ['day'] must carry its normal meaning. . . . It seems inescapable that Genesis presents the creation in six days."<sup>53</sup>

- Stek writes:

Surely there is no sign or hint within the narrative [of Genesis 1] itself that the author thought his 'days' to be irregular designations – first a series of undefined periods, then a series of solar days – or that the 'days' he bounded with 'evening and morning' could possibly be understood as long aeons of time. His language is plain and simple, and he speaks in plain and simple terms of one of the most common elements in humanity's experience of the world.<sup>54</sup>

- Hamilton writes:

It is highly debatable whether the interpretation of Genesis' days as metaphorical for geological ages can be sustained. For one thing, it allows the concerns of establishing concord with science (ever changing in its conclusions) to override an understanding of a Hebrew word [yom] based on its contextual usage. Furthermore, one would have to take extreme liberty with the phrase, "there was evening, and there was morning – the x day."<sup>55</sup>

- Hasel writes:

The author of Genesis 1 could not have produced more comprehensive and all-inclusive ways to express the idea of a literal "day" than the ones that were chosen. There is a complete lack of indicators from prepositions, qualifying expressions, construct phrases, semantic-syntactical connections, and so on, on the basis of which the designation "day" in the creation week could be taken to be anything different than a regular 24-hour day. The combinations of the factors of articular usage, singular gender, semantic-syntactical constructions, time boundaries, and so on, corroborated by the divine promulgations in such Pentateuchal passages as Exodus 20:8-11 and Exodus 31:12-17, suggest uniquely and

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<sup>53</sup> A. Ross, 109.

<sup>54</sup> John H. Stek, "What Says Scripture?" in *Portraits of Creation: Biblical and Scientific Perspectives on the World's Formation*, ed. Howard J. Van Till and others (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 237-238.

<sup>55</sup> Hamilton, 54.

consistently that the creation "day" is meant to be literal, sequential, and chronological in nature.<sup>56</sup>

- Sailhamer writes, "That week, as far as we can gather from the text itself, was a normal week of six twenty-four hour days and a seventh day in which God rested."<sup>57</sup>
- And, finally, Walton writes:

We cannot be content to ask, "Can the word [yo,m] bear the meaning I would like it to have?" We must instead try to determine what the author and audience would have understood from the usage in the context. With this latter issue before us, it is extremely difficult to conclude that anything other than a twenty-four-hour day was intended. It is not the text that causes people to think otherwise, only the demands of trying to harmonize with modern science.<sup>58</sup>

In addition, the premier Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon lists Gen. 1:5 as the first entry under the definition "day of twenty-four hours."<sup>59</sup> And Saeboe, in the acclaimed *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, includes yo,m in Gen. 1:5 as referring to a "full day" of twenty-four hours.<sup>60</sup>

Indeed, even some proponents of the day-age theory acknowledge the apparent strength of the historic literal view. For example, Archer writes, "From a superficial reading of Genesis 1, the impression received is that the entire creative process took place in six twenty-four-hour days."<sup>61</sup> Harris writes, "I will freely admit, that the view that the days were 24-hour days is a natural first reading of the chapter, especially in English."<sup>62</sup> Pun writes,

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<sup>56</sup> Hasel (1994), 31.

<sup>57</sup> Sailhamer (1996), 95 (he believes the week refers to creation of the promised land).

<sup>58</sup> John H. Walton, *Genesis*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 81.

<sup>59</sup> Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (New York: E. J. Brill, 1995), 2:399. Likewise, William H. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 130.

<sup>60</sup> Magne Saeboe, "<oy yo,m," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 6:23.

<sup>61</sup> Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 196.

<sup>62</sup> R. Laird Harris, "The Length of the Creative Days in Genesis 1" in *Did God Create in Six Days?* ed. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall (Taylors, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1999), 103.



It is apparent that the most straightforward understanding of the Genesis record, without regard to all of the hermeneutical considerations suggested by science, is that God created heaven and earth in six solar days, that man was created in the sixth day, that death and chaos entered the world after the Fall of Adam and Eve, that all of the fossils were the result of the catastrophic universal deluge which spared only Noah's family and the animals therewith.<sup>63</sup>

Those who claim that the days of creation refer to geological ages usually argue: (1) the word "day" can be used figuratively for a period of time of unspecified length and (2) there are indications it is being so used in Genesis 1. Of course, no one disputes that "day" *can be* used figuratively. The issue is whether there are sufficient indications it is being used that way in this context. There are not.

Proponents of the day-age view place much weight on the fact the report of the seventh day is not accompanied by the refrain "there was evening and there was morning." This allegedly shows that the seventh day has no end (i.e., is nonliteral), which, in turn, suggests that the other days also may be nonliteral.<sup>64</sup> This argument fails for several reasons.

First, if the absence of the refrain distinguishes the seventh day as nonliteral, then the presence of the refrain establishes the first six days as literal. One cannot take an implication from the absence of a feature and claim it applies when the feature is present. Imagine that each event in an account of fruit picking ended with "and they used a red basket" but the final event ended simply with "and they used a basket." One would be justified in exploring the significance of the omission of "red" in the report of the final event. But if one concluded it meant that the basket used for the final event was not red, one could not parlay that into a denial that red baskets were used in the earlier events. The conclusion that the final basket was not red depends on the conclusion that the others were.

Second, in the words of Fretheim:

To suggest that the seventh day is an indeterminate period of time because evening and morning are not mentioned flies in the face of clear evidence to the contrary. In Gen. 2:3 God blesses and hallows that day,

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<sup>63</sup> Pattle P. T. Pun, "A Theology of Progressive Creationism," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 39 (March 1987), 14.

<sup>64</sup> See, e.g., Hugh Ross, *Creation and Time* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1994), 48-50; Don Stoner, *A New Look at an Old Earth* (Paramount, CA: Schroeder Publishing Co., 1992), 46-47. Mathews says (p. 149), "Also, the seventh day does not have the concluding refrain 'evening and morning,' which suggests its continuation for some period and thus its nonliteral nature." See also, Collins (1999), 137-138 (who advocates an anthropomorphic-days view rather than a simple day-age view), and Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 63.

clearly indicating that it is a specified day that is set aside as a holy day. Then in Exodus 20:11 that blessed and hallowed day is identified with the normal Sabbath day. Generally, to argue from the absence of something in the text is treacherous; there is not an absolute exactness of repetition in the first six days either ("and it was so" is missing from the fifth day, for example).<sup>65</sup>

Third, the absence of the refrain is readily explained by the fact the termination of the seventh day was communicated by a different formula. As Kelly observes:

Is it not more concordant with the patent sense of the context of Genesis 2 (and Exodus 20) to infer that because the Sabbath differed in quality (though not - from anything we can infer from the text - in quantity), a slightly different concluding formula was appended to indicate a qualitative difference (six days involved work; one day involved rest)? The formula employed to show the termination of the first Sabbath: "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made" (Gen. 2:2) seems by the normal rules of biblical interpretation to intend an end just as definite as that of 'and the evening and the morning were the first day'.<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, if the refrain not only closes the preceding day but also opens the way to the next period of creation-specific activity, the next daytime, it would be out of place after that activity was completed. Though days certainly follow, they are not days unique to the creation event, which is the focus of the narrative.

Moreover, in the sequence of six days, the phrase marks off one day's creative activities from the next, but since the Lord rested from the seventh day onward, why would Moses need to distinguish the first day of rest from a second, third, or hundredth day of rest? Hence, including the formulaic phrase at the end of each creative day makes sense, whereas it makes little sense after the seventh day.<sup>67</sup>

The attempt to bolster the argument by appeal to Heb. 4:1-11 is misguided. The fact God in Gen. 2:2 entered into a state of rest from his creative work does not mean the seventh day itself is ongoing. As Kulikovsky shows, "God's rest should be viewed as a long period of time *beginning with* the seventh day of creation, not as equivalent to the seventh day" (emphasis supplied).<sup>68</sup> Similarly, Fretheim notes, "The occasional appeal to

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<sup>65</sup> Fretheim (1990), 20.

<sup>66</sup> Kelly, 111.

<sup>67</sup> Feinberg, 600.

Hebrews 4 cannot be sustained, not least because the language is eschatological. The text simply does not address the question of the length of the seventh day of creation (though it might be noted that 'day' is used in its normal way in verses 7-8) or how the seventh day is related to God's eternal rest."<sup>69</sup>

The claim that Jn. 5:17 establishes that the seventh day of Gen. 2:2-3 is an ongoing, nonliteral day fares no better. Collins states the argument this way:

In John 5:17 Jesus has healed a man on the Sabbath, for which the Jews would persecute him (v. 16); then Jesus claims "my Father is working up to now, and I am working" – and everyone knew that by "my Father" he meant "God." What is the implication? God is still "working," even though it is his Sabbath; and his Son is warranted in doing likewise.<sup>70</sup>

First, the cogency of the Lord's response does not depend on his Jewish antagonists accepting the proposition of Hebrews 4 that God's seventh-day rest at creation has never ended. It is enough that the Jews acknowledged that God worked on the *weekly Sabbaths*, the same Sabbath on which Jesus was accused of working.<sup>71</sup> In fact, the debate among first-century rabbis was not whether God was justified in working at all in light of Gen. 2:2-3, but whether he was justified in working on the weekly Sabbaths. The consensus "was that God works on the Sabbath, for otherwise providence

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<sup>68</sup> Andrew S. Kulikovskiy, "God's Rest in Hebrews 4:1-11," *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 13 (No. 2 1999), 61. John MacArthur puts it this way in *The Battle for the Beginning* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2001) 187:

Notice, too, that there is a significant omission in the biblical record of day seven. Every other day's record ends with similar words: "And the evening and the morning were the [nth] day" (cf. vv. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). But no such formula is used to close the seventh day. This does not suggest, as some have asserted, that day seven was a long era that covers all of human history. The omission is by no means an indication that the days of creation were really long epochs. As we have seen repeatedly, the sequence of creation, the language of Genesis, and the clear statements found in such passages as Exodus 20:11 and 31:17 make clear that these were normal twenty-four-hour days. Another day certainly followed this seventh day. But the omission of the formula on day seven suggests that the rest God entered into was a *permanent* rest from His creative works. He ceased creating and was completely satisfied with what He had created.

<sup>69</sup> Fretheim (1990), 20-21. Young agrees (1964) (p. 77-78, n. 73): "It should be noted that the seventh day is to be interpreted as similar in nature to the preceding six days. There is no scriptural warrant ever (certainly not Hebrews 4:3-5) for the idea that the seventh day is eternal."

<sup>70</sup> Collins (1999), 138. See also, H. Ross, 49-50.

<sup>71</sup> See, Noel Weeks, *The Sufficiency of Scripture* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988), 114.

itself would go into *weekly* abeyance" (emphasis supplied).<sup>72</sup> Or, as Bruce expresses the consensus, "God was active all the time, on sabbath days as much as on ordinary days."<sup>73</sup>

Second, even if the Lord had argued from the premise that God's seventh-day rest was perpetual and that God is therefore always working on his Sabbath, it would not mean the seventh day of creation was nonliteral. That premise does not address whether the divine rest consists of an extended seventh day of creation or an age that was inaugurated on a literal seventh day.

A second alleged indicator that "day" is being used figuratively in Genesis 1 is its use in Gen. 2:4 for an indefinite period of time.<sup>74</sup> But as previously noted, the expression "on the day that" in Genesis 2:4 does not provide evidence for figurative usage in the creation account. "The basic issue is the fact that [in Gen. 2:4] we have a bound form in an idiom (*bym* + infinitive construct), which cannot give us semantic information about the meaning of *yom* outside this expression."<sup>75</sup> Waltke puts it this way:

The appeal to "day" in compounds such as "in the day" (Gen. 2:4) and "the day of the Lord" to validate the "Day-Age Theory," the theory that "day" in Genesis 1 does not necessarily denote the twenty-four hour diurnal day but may designate a geologic age or stage, is linguistically flawed. The use of "day" in syntagms, "the ordered and unified arrangement of words in a distinctive way," such as these is clearly different from its use with numerals: "the first day," "second day." The argument is as fallacious as saying that "apple" does not necessarily indicate the round edible fruit of the rosaceous tree because this is not its meaning in "pineapple."<sup>76</sup>

More generally, Hasel states:

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<sup>72</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 247.

<sup>73</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 127. The distinction between Sabbaths and ordinary days is also implicit in Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1966), 216-217:

Verse 17 must be set against the background of the relation of God to the Sabbath rest. In the commandment concerning the Sabbath (Exod xx 11, but contrast Deut v 15) we have this explanatory clause: "In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth . . . but on the seventh He rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath and made it holy." However, the theologians of Israel realized that God did not really cease to work on the Sabbath. There are a whole series of rabbinic statements . . . to the effect that Divine Providence remained active on the Sabbath, for otherwise, the rabbis reasoned, all nature and life would cease to exist.

<sup>74</sup> See, e.g., Archer (1982), 62-63; H. Ross, 52.

<sup>75</sup> Collins (1999), 147-148 (n. 39).

<sup>76</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, "Literary Genre of Genesis, Chapter One," *Crux* 27 (December 1991), 10 (n. 30).

The extended, non-literal meanings of the Hebrew term *yo,m* are always found in connection with prepositions, prepositional phrases with a verb, compound constructions, formulas, technical expressions, genitive combinations, construct phrases, and the like. In other words, extended, non-literal meanings of this Hebrew term have special linguistic and contextual connections which indicate clearly that a non-literal meaning is intended. If such special linguistic connections are absent, the term *yo,m* does not have an extended, non-literal meaning; it has its normal meaning of a literal day of 24-hours.<sup>77</sup>

A third alleged indicator that "day" is being used figuratively in Genesis 1 is that the heavenly bodies, including the sun, were not created and put in place until the fourth day. The contention is that, since the first three days of creation could not be "solar days," one should not conclude they have the same duration as solar days.<sup>78</sup>

The problem with this contention is summarized well by Feinberg:

[E]ven if there is no sun, God still has the earth revolving on its axis, and he knows how long his activities took. Hence, even if sun, moon, and stars are not in place until day four, the events of the first three days still could have lasted 24-hours apiece. God would know how long (from our perspective) his actions took, so when Genesis 1 tells us that the first three days were equal to the next three, that is enough reason to think all six days equal in length. A miracle-working omniscient God who could create the whole universe surely knows how to calculate time in that universe at any stage of its existence.<sup>79</sup>

Whitcomb expresses it this way:

[W]e may assume that the first three days of creation were the same length as the last three days, in reference to which God set lights in the heavens "for seasons, and for days, and for years" (1:14), because exactly the same descriptive phrases are used of each group of three days. The fact that the sun was not created until the fourth day does not make the first three days long periods of time, for on the first day God created a localized light source in the heaven in reference to which the rotating earth passed through the same night/day cycle. Surely Genesis 1:14 is intended

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<sup>77</sup> Hasel (1994), 23.

<sup>78</sup> See, e.g., Mathews, 148-149 (though he does not put it quite this boldly).

<sup>79</sup> Feinberg, 601.

to lock the days of creation into the well-known time units of astronomy, for if "days" in this verse are not literal days, then what are "years"?<sup>80</sup>

A fourth alleged indicator that "day" is being used figuratively in Genesis 1 is the account in Gen. 2:15-22 of Adam's experiences on day six. The claim is that too much is done to fit within a single day.<sup>81</sup> In the words of Archer:

Gen. 1:27 states that after creating all the land animals on the sixth day, God created man, both male and female. Then, in the more detailed treatment of Gen. 2, we are told that God created Adam first, gave him the responsibility of tending the Garden of Eden for some time until He observed him to be lonely. He then granted him the fellowship of all the beasts and animals on earth, with the opportunity to bestow names upon them all. Some undetermined period after that, God observed that Adam was still lonely and finally fashioned a human wife for him by means of a rib removed from him during a "deep sleep." Then at last he brought Eve before Adam and presented her to him as his new life partner. Who can imagine that all these transactions could possibly have taken place in 120 [sic?] minutes of the sixth day (or even within twenty-four hours, for that matter)?<sup>82</sup>

In the first place, this argument reads into the text more than is there. As Ham, Sarfati, and Wieland point out:

Adam did not have to name *all* the animals – only those God brought to him. For instance, Adam was commanded to name "every beast of the field" (Gen. 2:20), not "beast of the earth" (Gen. 1:25). The phrase "beast of the field" is most likely a subset of the larger group "beast of the earth." He did not have to name "everything that creeps upon the earth" (Gen. 1:25), or any of the sea creatures. Also, the number of "kinds" would be much less than the number of "species" in today's classification.<sup>83</sup>

Second, the text says nothing about God observing Adam's loneliness after some period of time. Rather, "[t]he narrative *begins with* the striking announcement by God that the man is not yet as God had planned [him] to be" (emphasis supplied).<sup>84</sup> Mathews

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<sup>80</sup> John C. Whitcomb, Jr. "The Science of Historical Geology" *Westminster Theological Journal* 36 (Fall 1973), 67.

<sup>81</sup> See, e.g., Archer (1982), 59-60; H. Ross, 50-51.

<sup>82</sup> Archer (1994), 201.

<sup>83</sup> Ken Ham, Jonathan Sarfati, and Carl Wieland, *The Revised & Expanded Answers Book*, ed. Don Batten (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2000), 46-47. According to Mathews (p. 215), "The creatures are named within three broad categories: domesticated 'livestock,' 'birds,' and 'beasts of the field' (cf. 3:1)."

observes, "Whether the man felt his aloneness at first is not stated; only the divine viewpoint is given."<sup>85</sup> Hamilton notes, "it is God who makes the judgment about the unsuitability of man's aloneness. Man is not consulted for his thoughts on the matter. At no point does man offer to God any grievance about his current circumstances."<sup>86</sup> In naming the animals, Adam realized that none was a suitable helper, one "matching him," but that is different than suggesting that time beyond that exercise was needed for him to pine for companionship.

Third, the translation that God "finally" or "at last" brought Eve before Adam does not imply that a lengthy period had elapsed. It was simply Adam's way of contrasting the new creature (woman) to the many animals that had recently been brought before him. The clause in 2:23 can just as easily be translated "This one, this time [zo, 't± happa'am] is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."<sup>87</sup> Another possible reading is simply, "This time, bone of my bones . . ."<sup>88</sup>

With these assumptions and misconceptions cleared away, the argument is exposed as a mere assertion. The point is made colorfully in Jordan's response to Archer's rhetorical question, "Who can imagine it?" He writes:

Well, anyone can imagine it:

6:00 A.M. – God makes the animals.

6:01 A.M. – God takes counsel with Himself to make man.

6:02 A.M. – God makes Adam. Forming him of dust takes one minute.

6:05 A.M. – After talking with Adam for a minute or so, God starts to plant the Garden.

6:10 A.M. – The Garden is completed.

6:11 A.M. – God puts Adam in the Garden.

6:12 A.M. – God warns Adam about the forbidden tree.

6:13 A.M. – Adam has breakfast.

6:30 A.M. – God reveals His decision to make Eve.

6:31 A.M. – God brings the animals to Adam to name. They are brought by "kinds," so not every specific species, let alone every individual, is brought. Let's say that it takes Adam eight hours to name them all, male and female, with a half-hour lunch break. (This is probably far too long at the time.) This brings us to:

3:00 P.M. – Adam takes a nap.

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<sup>84</sup> A. Ross, 125.

<sup>85</sup> Mathews, 213.

<sup>86</sup> Hamilton, 175.

<sup>87</sup> Wenham, 70; Hamilton, 179-180.

<sup>88</sup> Mathews, 218.

3:28 P.M. – Adam wakes up and meets Eve.  
3:29 P.M. – God speaks to Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:28-30).  
3:30 P.M. – We still have two and a half hours to sunset.

Now, what's so hard about that?<sup>89</sup>

## FRAMEWORK HYPOTHESIS

Unlike the day-age view, advocates of the "framework hypothesis" recognize (or are willing to accept) that the creation days are literal days, but they view them as part of a literary scheme that is intended to communicate a theological point, somewhat like a parable functions. Feinberg summarizes the view this way:

Put simply, the whole sequence of seven days of creation is not a chronological account of the sequence of historical events when God created our universe. Rather, it is a literary device the writer uses to tell a story that conveys great theological truth. In other words, the "days of creation" happen to be the mold in which the writer chose to tell the story of God's creation and sovereign rule of the universe. They should not be understood as teaching that God created in six literal days. . . .

Once we remove the idea that the days teach a historical sequence, the age-day vs. twenty-four-hour-day debate ends. The most natural thing to say about the days is that they are ordinary days like ours. That does the least violence to the normal meaning of "day" and of our text. However – and this is the crucial proviso – all this means on the literary framework theory is that the author chose the literary device or motif of seven days to make his theological points. It doesn't mean that the days are actual historical days of any sort. . . . We can say some things historically from [Genesis 1-2], but the length of day or how many days God used to create are not among them.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Jordan, 47. See also, Russell Grigg, "Naming the Animals: All in a days work for Adam," *Creation Ex Nihilo* 18 (September-November 1996), 46-49.

<sup>90</sup> Feinberg, 603-604. For explanations of the framework hypothesis by its proponents, see Meredith G. Kline, "Because It Had Not Rained," *Westminster Theological Journal* 20 (May 1958), 146-157; Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning*, trans. David G. Preston (Downer Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1984), 49-59; Meredith G. Kline, "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 48 (1996), 2-15; Mark Futato, "Because It Had Rained: A Study of Gen 2:5-7 with Implications for Gen 2:4-25 and Gen 1:1-2:3," *Westminster Theological Journal* 60 (Spring 1998) 1-21; Mark Ross, "The Framework Hypothesis: An Interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:3" in *Did God Create in Six Days?* ed. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall (Taylors, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1999), 113-130; Lee Irons with Meredith G. Kline, "The Framework Interpretation," in *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the "Days" of Creation*, ed. by David G. Hagopian (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux Press, 2001), 217-256. For full-scale critiques of the theory, see Young (1962), 1-34; Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., "From Chaos to Cosmos: A Critique of the Non-Literal Interpretations of Genesis 1:1-2:3," in *Did God Create in Six Days?* ed. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall (Taylors, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1999), 153-198; Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., "Exegetical and Theological Observations on the Framework Hypothesis" in *The Report of the Minority of*



As with the day-age view, some proponents of the framework hypothesis acknowledge the apparent strength of the historic literal view. For example, Ridderbos admits, "one who reads Genesis 1 is almost bound to receive the impression that the author's intent is to say that creation took place in six ordinary days."<sup>91</sup> Mark Ross says of the view that Gen. 1:1-2:3 "is not intended to indicate the chronology or duration of the acts of creation":

Admittedly, this is not the first impression one gets from the text. The steady march of days – day one, day two, day three, *etc.* – strongly suggests a sequential, chronological account. The sanctification of the seventh day, and its enshrining in the Decalogue as rooted in the seven-day creation, only strengthen this impression. Nevertheless, first impressions, and even considered second impressions, are not always accurate; reasons can arise which lead one to reject a seemingly obvious and well-supported view in favor of an alternative, perhaps a more subtle alternative.<sup>92</sup>

The evidence that allegedly makes the framework interpretation a plausible understanding of the days of creation is that the first three days and the second three days correspond to each other. This correspondence is said to suggest that the second triad of days is a temporal recapitulation of the first triad. That is, days four, five, and six provide details, respectively, regarding the creation events reported briefly in days one, two, and three. Irons explains the significance like this:

This deliberate two-triad structure, or literary framework, suggests that the several creative works of God have been arranged by Moses, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in their particular order for theological and literary, rather than sequential, reasons. For this reason we believe the days of the creation week are a figurative framework providing the narrative structure for God's historical creative works.<sup>93</sup>

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*the Committee to Study the Framework Hypothesis*, presented to the Presbytery of Southern California of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church October 15-16, 1999, 13-143 (online at [www.kennethgentry.com/Merchant2/creationreport.pdf](http://www.kennethgentry.com/Merchant2/creationreport.pdf)); Jordan, 29-69, 235-245; Andrew S. Kulikovsky, "A Critique of the Literary Framework View of the Days of Creation," *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 37 (March 2001), 237-244.

<sup>91</sup> N. H. Ridderbos, *Is There a Conflict Between Genesis 1 And Natural Science?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Co, 1957), 29.

<sup>92</sup> M. Ross, 113-114.

<sup>93</sup> Lee Irons, "The Framework Interpretation: An Exegetical Summary," Extracted from *Ordained Servant* 9 (January 2000), 7-11 (online at <http://www.opc.org/OS/html/V9/1c.html>).

The problem is that "the proposed correspondence between the days of creation is not nearly as exact as its advocates have supposed."<sup>94</sup>

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" (Heb. *raqia'*) 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) and three times on Day 4 (Gen. 1:14-19). Of course Day 4 also has correspondence 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, 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 *seas*," 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 creatures created on this day . . . 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 the 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 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.<sup>95</sup>

But even granting some level of schematic form in Genesis 1, one cannot leap to the conclusion that what is stated is to be taken figuratively. In the words of Young:

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<sup>94</sup> Grudem, 302.

<sup>95</sup> Grudem, 302. Thus, Keil and Delitzsch state (p. 38), "The work of creation does not fall, as *Herder* and others maintain, into two triads of days, with the work of the second answering to that of the first." See also, Young (1962), 26-31; Gentry, 106-122; Kulikovsky (2001), 239-240.

In the first place, from the fact that some of the material in Genesis one is given in schematic form, it does not necessarily follow that what is stated is to be dismissed as figurative or as not describing what actually occurred. Sometimes a schematic arrangement may serve the purpose of emphasis. Whether the language is figurative or symbolical, however, must be determined upon exegetical grounds. Secondly, a schematic disposition of the material in Genesis one does not prove, nor does it even suggest, that the days are to be taken in a non-chronological sense. There appears to be certain schematization, for example, in the genealogies of Matthew one, but it does not follow that the names of the genealogies are to be understood in a non-chronological sense, or that Matthew teaches that the generations from Abraham to David parallel, or were contemporary with, those from David to the Babylonian captivity and that these in turn are paralleled to the generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ. . . . Why, then, must we conclude that, merely because of a schematic arrangement, Moses has disposed of chronology?<sup>96</sup>

Genesis 2:5 is believed by some to be the clincher for the framework hypothesis. Gen. 2:4-7 states (NASU):

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven. <sup>5</sup> Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. <sup>6</sup> But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. <sup>7</sup> Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Framework proponents make three arguments from this verse.<sup>97</sup> First, they argue that since in 2:5 there is not yet any vegetation, then Adam's creation in 2:7 precedes the creation of vegetation. This contradicts the creation account in Genesis 1, which places the creation of vegetation on day three and the creation of Adam on day six. So they claim that if one thinks the days of Genesis 1 are chronological, one is faced with a contradiction, but if the days are not meant to convey chronology, as the framework view contends, then the contradiction is avoided.

Second, they argue that "the verse takes it for granted that providential operations were not of a supernatural kind, but that God ordered the sequence of creation acts so that the continuance and development of the earth and its creatures could proceed by natural

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<sup>96</sup> Young (1964), 65-66.

<sup>97</sup> See, Feinberg, 606-608. For a full-scale critique of these arguments, see Michael R. Butler, "Additional Comments on the Genesis 2:5 Argument" in *The Report of the Minority of the Committee to Study the Framework Hypothesis*, presented to the Presbytery of Southern California of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church October 15-16, 1999, 144-186 (online at [www.kennethgentry.com/Merchant2/creationreport.pdf](http://www.kennethgentry.com/Merchant2/creationreport.pdf)).

means."<sup>98</sup> If the normal activities of the laws of nature were operating, then God was not sustaining day and night during the first three days by supernatural means (i.e., not giving daylight without the sun). And if the sun was present from day one, then clearly day four is a temporal recapitulation.

Third, framework proponents argue that Gen. 2:5 disproves the literal-day view in that it says that the reason there was no vegetation on Day 6 was that it had not rained. If the days were literal days then on Day 6 the vegetation was only three days old. If it was only three days old, it wouldn't be dead and gone because of a lack of rain. Blocher explains it this way:

That explanation [that it had not yet rained] presupposes the normal activity of the laws of nature for the growth of plants (an operation of divine providence), and a sufficient length of time for the absence of rain to be able to constitute the cause of the absence of plants. That does not fit the hypothesis of a literal week for the creation of the whole cosmos. If the dry land did not emerge until Tuesday and if vegetation has existed only from that day, an explanation is not going to be given the following Friday that there is no vegetation because there is no rain! Such reasoning would be against reason. Now the inspired author of Genesis, who revised the *tolýdot* and constructed the prologue, the wise man (whom we are bold enough to name Moses) would not have preserved a contradiction in 2:5. If he repeated the explanation given, it is because he did not understand the days of the first chapter literally. It is a necessary implication that in Genesis 2:5 Scripture supplies the proof that the week of the Genesis prologue is not literal; this proof has not been refuted.<sup>99</sup>

The problem is that each of these arguments is built on a misunderstanding of Gen. 2:5. The structure of Genesis is marked by the initial section on creation (1:1 - 2:3) followed by 10 *TolýDoT* sections: of the heavens and the earth (2:4 - 4:26); of Adam (5:1 - 6:8); of Noah (6:9 - 9:29); of Shem, Ham, and Japheth (10:1 - 11:9); of Shem (11:10-26); of Terah (11:27 - 25:11); of Ishmael (25:12-18); of Isaac (25:19 - 35:29); of Esau, the father of Edom (twice) (36:1-8; 36:9 - 37:1); of Jacob (37:2 - 50:26). The word *TolýDoT* often is translated as "generations," "histories," or simply "descendants." As a heading for the various sections of Genesis, it announces the historical development from the ancestor and means "this is what became of . . ."<sup>100</sup>

So in 1:1 - 2:3 the creation is brought into existence, and then in 2:4 - 4:26 we are told what became of that creation. Day 6 is highlighted with additional details because Adam and Eve, their placement in the Garden, and God's command governing their lives

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<sup>98</sup> Kline (1996), 13.

<sup>99</sup> Blocher, 56.

<sup>100</sup> A. Ross, 69-72.

in the Garden are central to what became of the very good creation. In this section, we see that sin entered the world through mankind, the creation was cursed as a result (see, Rom. 8:18-25), and sin spread and worsened.

Gen. 2:5 says only that two specific types of vegetation had not yet sprung up: "shrub (šāi,ahē) of the field" and "plant (‘e,šāēb) of the field." These are different from the seed-bearing plants and fruit trees mentioned in 1:11-12; they are post-fall forms of vegetation. The mention of their "yet" having sprung up contrasts the pre-fall and post-fall worlds and points to the impending lapse of mankind and judgment of God. As Jewish scholar Umberto Cassuto explains:

What is meant by the term j^yc! šāi,ahē of the field and the bc#u@ ‘e,šāēb of the field mentioned here? Modern commentators usually consider the terms to connote the *vegetable kingdom as a whole*; thence it follows that our section contradicts the preceding chapter, according to which vegetation came into being on the third day. . . . All interpretations of this kind introduce into the text something that is not there, in order to create the inconsistency. When the verse declares that these species were missing, the meaning is simply that *these* kinds were wanting, but *no others*. If we wish to understand the significance of the j^yc! šāi,ahē of the field and the bc#u@ ‘e,šāēb of the field in the context of our narrative, we must take a glance at the end of the story. It is stated there, in the words addressed by the Lord God to Adam after he had sinned: THORNS AND THISTLES *it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the bc#u@ ‘e,šāēb of the field* (iii 18). The words bc#u@ ‘e,šāēb of the field are identical with the expression in our verse; whilst *thorns and thistles*, which are synonymous with the j^yc! šāi,ahē of the field, are a particularization of the general concept conveyed by the latter (cf. *one of the <yj!yc! šāi,hēi,m*, in Gen. xxi 15). These species did not exist, or were not found in the form known to us, until after Adam's transgression, and it was in consequence of the fall that they came into the world or received their present form.<sup>101</sup>

Gen. 2:5-6 means that before creation was cursed as a result of mankind's sin, there were no "desert shrubs" or "cultivated grains."<sup>102</sup> There were no desert shrubs

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<sup>101</sup> Cassuto, 101-102. Regarding Cassuto's analysis, Feinberg writes (p. 621):

We can see from this explanation that Gen 2:5 does speak about natural processes. However, the conclusion literary framework proponents draw is erroneous. It does not signify a lengthy time for day three (rather than twenty-four hours), nor does it show us that the account is not chronological because of an alleged conflict between day three in Genesis 1 and this account. Rather, it talks about things that were not yet the case, but would be after the fall.

because prior to the curse there were no deserts. The earth was a lush paradise that was watered thoroughly by streams or springs that flowed up from the ground.<sup>103</sup> It was only after God substituted rainfall, which is sporadic and uneven, for the original paradisiacal watering mechanism that deserts arose. There were no cultivated grains because prior to the Fall man had not been sentenced to backbreaking farming. Prior to the Fall, man worked the Garden, not the ground.

In saying that these plant forms had "not yet" arisen, the question is raised in the reader's mind, "Well what happened that they arose thereafter?" As the story unfolds, we learn of mankind's sin and God's sentence. In Gen. 3:17-18 we are told that the earth shall be such that it will bring forth "thorns and thistles," which are an example of desert shrubs, and that man will through toilsome labor eat cultivated grains (wheat, barley, etc.), which is the exact phrase in 2:5.

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<sup>102</sup> Hamilton says (p. 154), "the reference is to some kind of desert shrub or bush." Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), 3:1321, includes: "for this see also R. Albertz *Weltschöpfung und Menschenschöpfung* p. 222<sup>74</sup>: a wild plant growing in the desert or steppe." Futato (p. 3-4) argues cogently that the terms for vegetation used in 2:5 are very precise and mean "wild shrubs of the steppe" and "cultivated grains." But as Butler points out (p. 148):

Later in his article, however, he assumes, without any argument or even comment, that the former stands for *all* non-cultivated vegetation. With this new sense of the term in hand he then assumes, again without any argument or comment, that these two types of vegetation (the non-cultivated and cultivated) together stand for all vegetation. In other words, he takes it as a given that 'wild shrubs' and 'cultivated grain' are to be understood as a merism for *all* vegetation. But this is certainly not the case.

<sup>103</sup> "Mist" is used in AV, RSV, ERV, NASB, NKJV, and ESV (which footnotes "spring" as an alternative). NIV and NRSV use "stream(s)" (NIV footnotes "mist" as an alternative). NEB and JB use "flood," and REB uses "moisture." In specific reference to Gen. 2:6, Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 1:11, states, "the subterranean stream of fresh water, groundwater." The two most thorough studies of the meaning of 'ed are Tsumura (1989), 94-116 and Gerhard F. Hasel and Michael G. Hasel, "The Hebrew Term 'ed in Gen 2,6 and Its Connection in Ancient Near Eastern Literature," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 112 (2000), 321-340. Tsumura concludes that the word probably refers to subterranean water that comes up to the surface of the earth. Hasel and Hasel agree (p. 324) "Tsumura is correct in deriving the 'ed-moisture from a source other than the sky and its clouds from which rain falls," but for philological and conceptual reasons, they reject his hypothesis that the ground was watered from a subterranean ocean. They also show that Dahood's interpretation "rain cloud" lacks philological, syntactical, and conceptual credibility. They conclude that 'ed in 2:6 is best understood as a mist/dew, which, in distinction to watering from above by rain, watered the ground through a continual rising from below, from the earth. "It seems certain that the watering of the arable land, the >>ground,<< by means of >>mist/dew<< ('ed) is radically different from the post-flood watering of the earth by rain (Gen 7,12; 8,2)." Hasel and Hasel, 339. Contrary to the suggestion of some, Job 36:27 is not helpful in clarifying the meaning of 'ed in Gen. 2:6. Since the term in Job 36:27 "appears in relationship to heaven and not to the earth . . . it does not seem to provide a contextual parallel except in contrast." Hasel and Hasel, 323. In addition, the Job passage has its own uncertainties. See, Tsumura (1989), 115-116; Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 15 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 273; Robert L. Alden, "dwa," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:17; Jordan, 237-238.

Kenneth Mathews writes:

The purpose of this ToI\$DoT section is its depiction of human life before and after the garden sin; the condition of the "land" after Adam's sin is contrasted with its state before the creation of man. Genesis 2:5-7 is best understood in light of 3:8-24, which describes the consequences of sin. This is shown by the language of 2:5-6, which anticipates what happens to the land because of Adam's sin (3:18,23). When viewed this way, we find that the "shrub" and "plant" of 2:5 are not the same as the vegetation of 1:11-12.<sup>104</sup>

Butler is worth quoting at length:

The author is not saying there is no vegetation at this time, but that there [was] an absence of specific kinds of vegetation. The author previously told us that God created seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the 4<sup>th</sup> day. Here he tells us that there were no wild desert shrubs and cultivated grains. Clearly there is no conflict [with chapter 1]. There were certain types of vegetation present but not others.

Three questions spring immediately to mind though. First, if there was no rain, how could there be any vegetation? The author provides the answer in v. 6. At that time there was a spring that came out of the ground that watered the surface of the earth. So while there was no rain, there was an abundant supply of water. The second and third questions are: Why were there no wild shrubs of the field if there was a plenteous supply of water? And why was there no cultivated grain? The answer to the former is obvious. The appearance of wild desert shrubs would be out of place in a land that drank deeply from plenteous water. Moreover, desert shrubs are not what is expected in a lavish environment of lush vegetation that is described in Genesis 1:11-12. The answer to the latter comes in v. 7. There the author tells us that man was created from the dust of the ground. Thus it appears that the reason for the lack of cultivated grain was that man was not yet present to cultivate the land.

So far, then, the author tells us of a completed creation. There is a spring coming out of the ground that waters the seed-bearing plants and fruit-bearing trees and a complete absence of desert-type vegetation. This is a lush environment not a desert environment. Since everything is in place God now creates man, his image-bearer, and places him in this glorious creation that he is to have dominion over. Everything is good. But why does our author bother to mention the fact there was no shrubs and that there was no cultivated grains? The remarks that there were no

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<sup>104</sup> Mathews, 194. See also, Kelly, 124-126.

wild shrubs seems to be merely a piece of trivia while the assertion that there was no cultivated grains seems to be completely superfluous – if there was no man, obviously there was no cultivated plants. That no answer is immediately forthcoming causes the reader to anticipate some sort of explanation. As he reads on he finds the author describing the man being placed in a garden filled with beautiful trees overloaded with delicious fruit. Man is given the task of taking care of the garden and is told by Jehovah God that the fruit is for his nourishment and enjoyment, even the fruit of the tree of life. He is forbidden, however, to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and if he does eat of it he will die.

Dramatic tension is thus introduced into the story. Everything is good, but there is also a potential for disaster. Paradise may be lost. Light is now shed on the previous statement about the absence of cultivated grains. Man is given the task of tending to the mature garden full of fruit trees. And since he has an abundant supply of food there is no need to cultivate grain crops. But what if man ate the forbidden fruit? Would he still enjoy the lush surroundings of Eden and partake of its choice fruit?

The rest of the story is well known. . . . No longer will man enjoy the fruit of the edenic trees. Now he must toil over recalcitrant soil in order to grow grains that he will make into bread. What was thus anticipated in 2:5-6, and portended in 2:17 has now come to pass. Whereas in the beginning there was no desert shrubs (thorns and thistles), there now will be. Whereas there was no cultivated grains, man will now have to engage in the backbreaking labor of plowing, sowing, irrigating and harvesting them for sustenance.

But what happened to the spring? The answer is implied by the cursing of the ground. Many commentators suggest that man will now have to contend with the thorns and thistles as though they were weeds choking out his crops. But this is not quite the point (the text certainly does not say this). Rather the land will not be watered as it was before and will thus become arid. From this time forward, the sporadic rain will be its only source of water. Only desert shrubs are fit to grow in such an environment. Thus we can infer that Jehovah God has dried up the spring.<sup>105</sup>

Finally, framework advocates claim as icing on their exegetical cake the alleged unending nature of the seventh day. The argument is that the figurative nature of the seventh day is a clue to the figurative nature of the other days. But as shown in the discussion of the day-age view, the claim that the seventh day of creation was an unending day is mistaken. That discussion will not be repeated here.

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<sup>105</sup> Butler, 152-155.



Thus, the framework theory offers no reason to reject the "seemingly obvious and well-supported view" of a chronological progression of literal days. Though dischronologies exist in the Hebrew Scriptures, that fact provides no warrant for imposing one in the face of contrary evidence. In Kidner's oft-cited words, "[T]he march of days is too majestic a progress to carry no implication of ordered sequence; it also seems over-subtle to adopt a view of the passage which discounts one of the primary impressions it makes on the ordinary reader. It is a story, not only a statement."<sup>106</sup> Moreover, "[a] sequence of days is also implied in God's command to human beings to imitate his pattern of work plus rest."<sup>107</sup> Grudem is correct to conclude: the framework theory "adopts an interpretation of Scripture which, upon closer inspection, seems very unlikely."<sup>108</sup>

Feinberg raises some additional problems with the framework view:

An initial question that troubles me is that, if the days of creation are just a literary device that is figurative, how do we know where to stop with figures of speech in Genesis 1–3? The days seem no more figurative or literal than Adam and Eve, the serpent, vegetation, animals, and all the rest. . . . And if the days may be figurative, then why not God, etc., as figures to represent something else? What hermeneutic tells us that some elements in this story are figures of speech and literary devices and others are not? No explanation is forthcoming! . . .

All of this is especially troubling, because if we cannot be certain about the historicity of the events recounted in Genesis 1–3, there are problems for other theological points.<sup>109</sup>

After mentioning some of these problems, Feinberg continues:

These are just some of the problems that stem from seeing the creation story as a literary way of presenting things that shouldn't be taken literally, but there is another problem. If this story and these days are only a literary device, then granting that the author can make his theological points by using any number of literary devices (if what he says is in no way historical, it matters little which literary device he chooses), why choose this one (the six days)? . . . [W]hy do it with this literary device

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<sup>106</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 54-55.

<sup>107</sup> Grudem, 304. See also, Robert C. Newman, "Are the Events in the Genesis Creation Account Set Forth in Chronological Order? Yes," in *The Genesis Debate*, ed. Ronald F. Youngblood (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 36-54.

<sup>108</sup> Grudem, 304.

<sup>109</sup> Feinberg, 613-614.

(the six days), a device that for all the world looks like an account of actual happenings on real days of some sort? Moreover, if this account is just a literary device, what does that tell us about other stories Moses recounts? Are the ten plagues at the time of the exodus another literary device, not to be taken literally? . . . Once you treat a piece whose literary genre seems to involve history as though it does not, that also raises serious questions about other texts that appear to be history of some sort.<sup>110</sup>

### MISCELLANEOUS NONLITERAL VIEWS

Another nonliteral interpretation is the "analogical-days view" (also called the "anthropomorphic-days view"). The claim is that the days of creation are *God's* workdays, which are merely analogous to human workdays. As analogies, they need not correspond to literal days in duration or even sequence.<sup>111</sup>

According to Collins, "the 'days' are *God's* work-days, which are *analogous*, and not necessarily *identical*, to our work days, structured for the purpose of setting a pattern for our own rhythm of rest and work; . . . length of time, either for the creation week, or before it or since it, is irrelevant to the communicative purpose of the account."<sup>112</sup> Hummel states:

Creation is pictured in six familiar periods followed by a seventh for rest, corresponding to the days of the week as Israel knew them. But the question still remains whether the format is figurative or literal, that is, an *analogy* of God's creative activity or a chronological *account* of how many hours he worked. . . .

In the Bible the human person is the central model used to reveal God's relationship and actions in history. God is pictured as seeing, speaking and hearing like a person even though he doesn't have eyes, lips or ears. Those figures of speech (anthropomorphisms) assure us that God is at least personal and can be known in an intimate relationship. . . .

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<sup>110</sup> Feinberg, 614-615.

<sup>111</sup> With some variation in the supporting arguments, see, Hummel, 213-216; Hamilton, 54-56; C. John Collins, "How old is the earth? Anthropomorphic days in Genesis 1:1-2:3?" *Presbyterion* 20 (Fall 1994), 109-130; Collins (1999), 131-151.

<sup>112</sup> Collins (1999), 144. In saying the days need not be "identical," he means they need not be "24 hours long, following in direct contiguous sequence." Collins (1999), 139 (n. 19). The days may be any length and may overlap, and events may be grouped into days for logical rather than chronological reasons, but the days are still "broadly sequential." Collins (1999), 142, 144 (n. 30).

The human model appears throughout Genesis 1. The writer also links God's creative activity to six days, marked by evening and morning, and followed by a day of rest. In the light of the other analogies, why should it be considered necessary to take this part of the account literally, as if God actually worked for six days (or epochs) and then rested?<sup>113</sup>

Given that God is able to create the entire universe in six literal (human) days and given the widely acknowledged textual indications that literal days are being described, why think the days are merely analogical? What is there in the text to indicate to readers that God did not actually create over six days but was merely couching his creative work in terms of six days to make a point? No good answer to that question is forthcoming, certainly no answer sufficient to overcome the impression that the days are literal.

The clues cited by Collins are the refrain "there was evening and there was morning," the absence of the refrain on the seventh day, and the statement in Ex. 31:17 that God, after ceasing his work on the seventh day, "got refreshment."<sup>114</sup> He summarizes their significance this way:

Once it has become clear to the reader that God's Sabbath is not an "ordinary" day, and that God's rest is not the same but analogous to ours, he will go back and read the passage looking for other instances of analogy. Then he will see what the significance of the refrain is: it too is part of an anthropomorphic presentation of God; he is likened to the ordinary worker, going through his rhythm of work and rest, looking forward to his Sabbath. The days are God's work days, which need not be *identical* to ours: they are instead analogous. Part of our expression of his image is in our copying of his pattern for a work week. The reader will then put the notices about God "seeing" that something was good (e.g. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) in this category (as if God were limited by time and sequence like we are, but we know he is not); he will also not be surprised by similar phenomena in 2:7 (God "formed" like a potter does), 22 (God "built" the woman).<sup>115</sup>

As shown in the discussion of the day-age view, the claim that the seventh day of creation was unending, and thus not an ordinary day, is mistaken. Without that, the argument is simply that the anthropomorphic descriptions of God justify concluding that the days of creation were not literal. That, however, is an unjustified leap.

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<sup>113</sup> Hummel, 214.

<sup>114</sup> Collins (1999), 137-139.

<sup>115</sup> Collins (1999), 139.

The fact certain actions of God are communicated by likening him to a human does not signal that other aspects of the narrative are to be taken figuratively. Young explains (speaking specifically of the framework hypothesis):

If the term "anthropomorphic" may legitimately be used at all, we would say that whereas it might apply to some elements of Genesis 2:7, it does not include all of them. In other words, if anthropomorphism is present, it is not present in each element of the verse. The words "and God breathed" may be termed anthropomorphic, but that is the extent to which the term may be employed. The man was real, the dust was real, the ground was real as was also the breath of life. To these elements of the verse the term "anthropomorphism" cannot legitimately be applied. Nor can everything in Genesis 3:21 be labeled with the term "anthropomorphic". We need but think, for example, of the man and the woman and the coats of skin.

What, then, shall we say about the representation of the first chapter of Genesis that God created the heaven and earth in six days? Is this anthropomorphic language? We would answer this question in the negative, for the word anthropomorphic, if it is a legitimate word at all, can be applied to God alone and cannot properly be used of the six days. In speaking of six days Moses may conceivably have been employing figurative, literal, or poetical language, but it was not anthropomorphic. Hence, we do not believe that it is accurate to speak of the six days as an anthropomorphic mode of expression.

From the presence of "anthropomorphic" words or expressions in Genesis one, it does not follow that the mention of the days is anthropomorphic nor does it follow that the days are to be understood in a topical or non-chronological order rather than chronologically. If the days are to be interpreted non-chronologically, the evidence for this must be something other than the presence of anthropomorphisms in the first chapter of Genesis. The occurrence of anthropomorphic language in Genesis one in itself, if such language really does occur, sheds no light one way or another upon the question whether the days are to be understood topically or chronologically. For that matter even the presence of figurative language or of a schematic arrangement, taken by themselves, would not warrant the conclusion that the days were not chronological.<sup>116</sup>

Moreover, if God communicates in Genesis that his work merely is being couched in terms of six days, rather than actually having been done in six days, it would make no sense to appeal to the creation week as the basis for the command to Israel to observe the Sabbath. The command to Israel is essentially "Do this because I did it." It is not "Do this because that is how I figuratively described what I did." To repeat Fretheim's comment:

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<sup>116</sup> Young (1962), 15-16.

The references to the days of creation in Exodus 20:11 and 31:17 in connection with the Sabbath law make sense only if understood in terms of a normal seven-day week. It should be noted that the references to creation in Exodus are not used as an analogy – that is, your rest on the seventh day ought to be like God's rest in creation. It is, rather, stated in terms of the imitation of God or a divine precedent that is to be followed: God worked for six days and rested on the seventh, and therefore you should do the same. Unless there is an exactitude of reference, the argument of Exodus does not work.<sup>117</sup>

Two other nonliteral views can be addressed quickly. The claim that the days of creation are not days on which creative work was performed but days on which the performance of that work was revealed ("days of revelation theory") is held by few people today. The view "largely rests on a misunderstanding of the word 'made' in Exodus 20:11."<sup>118</sup> Collins writes:

I have not included here the view that the days are six consecutive 24-hour days in which God *revealed* the narrative to Moses (P. J. Wiseman), nor the view that these are the six consecutive 24-hour days on which God *said* his instructions, while the fulfillment of the instructions took place over unstated periods of time (Alan Hayward's view that only what God *said* took place in the creation week; the rest would be in parentheses), since I do not seriously consider these to be within the grammatical possibilities.<sup>119</sup>

The claim that the days of creation are 24-hours of creative activity that are separated from each other by indefinite periods of time ("punctuated activity theory") is likewise held by few. Collins dismisses the idea with: "The 'punctuated activity theory' (position 2), it seems to me, does not adequately account for the refrain [there was evening and there was morning], and seems, like the day-age approaches, to ask for too large a degree of direct harmonization."<sup>120</sup> One area of improper harmonization that he singles out is the "clearing of the cloud cover" reading of the fourth day. He notes, "[S]ince the 'extended surface' is just a fancy name for the sky, this is invalid."<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Fretheim (1990), 19-20.

<sup>118</sup> Kidner, 54. See also, Hasel (1994), 14.

<sup>119</sup> Collins (1999), 145 (n. 31).

<sup>120</sup> Collins (1999), 148.

<sup>121</sup> Collins (1999), 148 (n. 40).

**GEN. 1:6-8 – God separated the waters into the waters above and the waters below by creating in the midst of the waters an expanse and spreading it out above the earth, thus creating the heavens. There was evening and there was morning, the second day.**

Some have argued forcefully that the word *raqi,a'* (traditionally rendered "firmament") necessarily connotes something solid,<sup>122</sup> but that "is not the best interpretation of the Hebrew."<sup>123</sup> The word is related to a verb meaning "to hammer out" or "stretch (a piece of metal) out," but "[i]t is the idea of spreading out that carries over to the noun, not the idea of a metallic substance."<sup>124</sup> (If the rendering *stereo,ma* in the LXX includes the notion of a solid structure, it may reflect the influence of Alexandrian theories of a "stone vault" of heaven.)<sup>125</sup> Thus, a number of modern translations opt for the less specific term "expanse" (e.g., NASB, NIV, WEB, NET, and ESV).

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<sup>122</sup> Most notably, Paul H. Seely, "The Firmament and the Water Above Part I: The Meaning of *raqia'* in Gen. 1:6-8," *Westminster Theological Journal* 53 (Fall 1991), 227-240. Seely does not believe the Bible teaches a solid firmament; rather, he believes this was an inspired concession to the naivete of ancient culture that was done to facilitate the communication of spiritual truth.

<sup>123</sup> Collins (1999), 135 (n. 8).

<sup>124</sup> Herman J. Austel, "hmv," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:935. See also, J. Barton Payne, "uq^r," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:862. Faulkner makes the point this way in "Geocentrism and Creation," *TJ* 15 (No. 2, 2001), 113:

The Hebrew word [translated "firmament"] is *raqiya'*, which is a noun that comes from a verb that means to beat out as into a thin sheet. Gold is a good example of this process. Gold is so malleable that hammers and other tools can be used to flatten and stretch the metal into very thin sheets that can be applied to objects to gild them. The question is, what property or properties are intended by the word *raqiya'*? If one wants to get across the hardness of the object, usually a metal, being beaten out, then 'firmament' may not be a bad translation.

However, what if the intended property is the stretched out nature of the *raqiya'* rather than hardness? This is consistent with the terminology of Psalm 104:2, which speaks of the stretching out of the heavens, though admittedly the Hebrew word used there for heaven is *shamayim*. However, Genesis 1:8 explicitly states that God called the firmament (*raqiya'*) heaven(s) (*shamayim*). Therefore, there is contextual Biblical evidence for equating these two Hebrew words, at least in some cases. If the stretched out nature of the *raqiya'* is what is intended, then 'firmament' is a bad translation, while 'expanse' used in many modern translations is very good.

<sup>125</sup> Payne, 862. R. K. Harrison in "Firmament" in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 2:306, questions whether *stereo,ma* carries this sense in LXX usage.

As Wenham notes, texts that are often construed as suggesting a solid *raqi,a'* are ambiguous on the point:

The noun is rare outside Gen 1. Ezek 1:22 and Dan 12:3 describe the firmament as shiny. Such comments may suggest that the firmament was viewed as a glass dome over the earth, but since the most vivid descriptions occur in poetic texts, the language may be figurative. Certainly Gen 1 is not concerned with defining the nature of the firmament, but with asserting God's power over the waters.<sup>126</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch concur:

u<sup>^</sup>yq!r<sup>`</sup>, from uq<sup>^</sup>r<sup>`</sup> to stretch, spread out, then beat or tread out, means *expansum*, the spreading out of the air, which surrounds the earth as an atmosphere. According to optical appearance, it is described as a carpet spread out above the earth (Ps. civ. 2), a curtain (Isa. xl. 22), a transparent work of sapphire (Ex. xxiv. 10), or a molten looking-glass (Job xxxvii. 18); but there is nothing in these poetical similes to warrant the idea that the heavens were regarded as a solid mass, a *sidhvreon*, or *cavlkeon* or *poluvcalkon*, such as Greek poets describe.<sup>127</sup>

Recognizing that the *raqi,a'* depicts something spread out over the earth, Mathews writes, "There is no indication, however, that the author conceived of it as a solid mass, a 'firmament' (AV) that supported a body of water above it."<sup>128</sup> Aalders likewise declares, "There is certainly no indication that the expanse must be considered as a firm substance itself."<sup>129</sup> According to Sailhamer, "[I]t would be unlikely that the narrative would have in view here 'a solid partition or vault that separates the earth from the waters above' (Westermann, p. 116)."<sup>130</sup>

Jordan, responding directly to Seely, states:

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<sup>126</sup> Wenham, 20.

<sup>127</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, 52-53.

<sup>128</sup> Mathews, 150.

<sup>129</sup> G. Ch. Aalders in *Genesis*, The Student's Bible Commentary, trans. William Heynen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 1:59. He puts the matter more forcefully a page later:

Many of the critics claim that this verse portrays an ancient legendary view that the sky was a vast dome made of some solid substance. This legend was, then, supposedly borrowed from the Babylonians. Such views find no basis in the text of Scripture. They are no more than arbitrary eisegesis of the sacred text. The Genesis account says nothing more than that God created the sky or its constituent elements. The creation narrative is completely and consistently silent on all such details. All it does is reveal to us that the sky that we daily see above owes its existence to our Creator God.

<sup>130</sup> Sailhamer (1990), 29.

Now, as Seely shows in his first article, the ancients used to argue over what this hard firmament is made of. The Bible does not say what it is made of. In light of this, Seely might have suggested that perhaps the firmament is not made of any kind of metal or stone at all, or anything hard. All we know is that God made it out of some kind of substance. It might, in fact, have been made of "spread out" empty space, if we consider "empty space" as actually having a matrix of some sort. . . .

Just as some modern conservatives err by stuffing modern science into Genesis 1, so Seely stuffs ancient science into it. He imports into the text notions of a hard shell and a hard-domed sky that are in fact not present there at all. However common such notions may have been among the idolatrous nations roundabout, and however common they may have been in the minds of ancient Israelites, they are not found in Genesis 1. All that is present in the text is a "stretched out something."<sup>131</sup>

Moreover, Genesis 1 seems to negate implicitly the notion of a solid firmament. As Jordan observes:

If the firmament were a rotating hard shell over the earth, the sun, moon, and stars would all have to move together. In fact, they do not, and everyone in the ancient world knew it. (It is, after all, impossible not to know it!) They also knew that the moving stars (planets) were not fixed to any hard firmament. For them, the hard firmament was the area of the fixed stars, not of the sun, moon, and planets. But this is *not* what Genesis 1 states. Genesis 1 puts all these various moving bodies in the area called "firmament" and that means that the firmament cannot be a hard shell.<sup>132</sup>

In addition, the **raqi,a'** is named "heaven" in v. 8,<sup>133</sup> and in vv. 26 and 28 (and numerous other places) the birds are described as existing in the heavens. In Deut. 4:17

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<sup>131</sup> Jordan, 229. For another direct response to Seely, see James Patrick Holding, "Is the *raqiya'* ("firmament") a solid dome? Equivocal language in the cosmology of Genesis 1 and the Old Testament: a response to Paul H. Seely" in *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 13 (No. 2, 1999), 44-51. Seely's response and Holding's reply are in *TJ* 15 (No. 2, 2001), 52-53.

<sup>132</sup> Jordan, 229-230.

<sup>133</sup> Seely and others contend that "heaven(s)" has a broader meaning than **raqi,a'**. But Holding points out (p. 46): "In Genesis 1:8, the implication is that **raqiya'** has the name **shamayim** in an exact one-to-one correspondence, just as is the case for the 'Earth' and the 'Seas' when they are named (v. 10). There is no reason to see a broader meaning of **shamayim** than an exact equation with **raqiya'**." Indeed, this correspondence is confirmed by the parallelism of Ps. 19:1. The phrase "the expanse (**raqi,a'**) of the heavens" (vv. 14-17) does not mean that **raqi,a'** is some specific *part* of heaven. That phrase simply is the full description of what **raqi,a'** standing alone represents. **Raqi,a'** is heaven described in terms of its breadth. Of course, it is unclear precisely where heaven starts. There is some ill-defined zone that is



they are said to fly in the heavens (see also, Prov. 30:19; Jer. 8:7). If *raqi,a'* was meant to connote solidity, it would be odd indeed to name it something that clearly does not have that quality.

Other texts also seem to weigh against the claim of solidity. Austel points out:

The imagery [regarding the heavens] is often phenomenological, and is both convenient and vividly forceful. Thus a disobedient Israel would find the heavens to be like iron (Lev 26:19) or like bronze (Deut 28:23), not yielding the much-needed rain. Note that if the heavens were conceived of as a metallic vault, as is commonly suggested from Gen 1:8, 14 etc., the above passages would be meaningless, since the skies would already be metal.<sup>134</sup>

The meaning of the "waters above" also has generated a fair amount of debate. Many are convinced that the "waters above" are the source of water that falls to the earth as rain and snow.<sup>135</sup> But as Seely points out, "by not naming the waters above the firmament as he named the waters below (Gen. 1:9–10) God signified that He had excluded them from the world made for man."<sup>136</sup> They are mentioned not because they are involved with mankind but because God's act of separating them from the waters below was an exercise of dominion, an act of imposing order upon them.<sup>137</sup> In keeping with their exclusion from mankind's world, the waters above are not mentioned again, except in Ps. 148:4, which is a reference back to Gen. 1:7.<sup>138</sup>

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"between heaven and earth" (2 Sam. 18:9; 1 Chron. 21:16; Ezek. 8:3; Zech. 5:9). Birds flying in that zone appear from earth to fly across the face of the expanse of heaven (Gen. 1:20).

<sup>134</sup> Austel, 935.

<sup>135</sup> E.g., Sarna writes (p. 8), "The purpose of the expanse is to create a void that separates what was taken to be the source of rain above from the water on earth." Mathews writes (p. 150), "In the Old Testament elsewhere there is evidence that the Hebrews understood that clouds produced rain and thus, from a phenomenological perspective, 'water' can be described as belonging to the upper atmosphere." Fretheim remarks (1994) (p. 344), "This 'dome' provided living space between the waters above (the source of rain and snow, flowing through windows, 7:11) and the waters on and below the earth."

<sup>136</sup> Paul H. Seely, "The Firmament and the Water Above Part II: The Meaning of 'The Water above the Firmament' in Gen. 1:6-8," *Westminster Theological Journal* 54 (Spring 1992), 34, citing O. H. Steck, *Der Schöpfungsbericht der Priesterschrift* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975) 72, 80 n. 304. Jordan writes (p. 180-181), "The waters below the firmament include the clouds, which recycle the waters below, continually baptizing and cleansing the earth through rain."

<sup>137</sup> Seely (1992), 34. This may be a polemic against certain ancient beliefs, but as Hasel has pointed out, such an emphasis "does not diminish in the least the biblical author's intention to write an account that has a literal intent to provide factual and historical information." Hasel (1994), 36 (n. 77), referring to Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Polemical Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," *Evangelical Quarterly* 46 (1974), 81-102.

<sup>138</sup> But Holding (p. 50) may go too far in stating, "No further revelation is given about the nature of these waters; nor is it said what has happened to them." They may be alluded to with reference to God's domain in passages such as Ps. 104:3.

It is true that precipitation is said to come from the heavens,<sup>139</sup> but the source of that water is never said to be *above* the heavens. For example, Ps. 104:13 says that God waters the mountains from his lofty abode, but it does not say how he does that. This poetic text is compatible with God acting from his lofty abode to generate and direct rain within the earth's atmosphere.

Given that the heavenly bodies are said in vv. 14-17 to be *in* the heavens and the waters are said in v. 7 to be *above* the heavens, it seems the waters above cannot be the source of rain and snow. Rather, the "waters above" must be beyond the farthest reaches of interstellar space.<sup>140</sup> Just what that means is unclear,<sup>141</sup> but Jordan's suggestion is intriguing and fits with possible references to waters in association with God's domain:

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<sup>139</sup> Gen. 7:11-12; Deut. 11:11, 17, 28:12; 2 Sam. 21:10; 1 Ki. 8:35; 2 Chron. 6:26, 7:13; Job 38:37; Isa. 55:10; Jer. 10:13.

<sup>140</sup> E.g., Jordan, 228-231; D. Russell Humphreys, *Starlight and Time* (Colorado Springs, CO: Master Books, 1994), 58-59. Though some are content with explanations appealing to phenomenological language, it is hard to make sense of the claim that the heavenly bodies *appear* to be lower than the waters above. If the waters above are not clouds, they do not appear at all; but if they are clouds, they appear *lower* than the heavenly bodies (since they obscure them). As Young stated (1964) (p. 90, n.94), "I am unable to accept the opinion that the waters above the expanse refer to the clouds, for this position does not do justice to the language of the text which states that these waters are *above* the expanse." Seely in "How to Define the Expanse in Genesis 1," 38 (December 2001) *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, 164 argues that placing the "waters above" beyond interstellar space violates Gen. 7:11, which he claims is a reference to the releasing of the waters above the expanse. But as Kulikovskiy explains in "Literary Framework Critique – A Response to Paul Seely," 38 (December 2001) *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, 165:

However, Seely offers no exegetical or contextual support for his assertion that the opening of "the floodgates of the heavens" is a reference to the releasing of the waters above the expanse. The only argument he presents in support of his interpretation is a scientific objection (or at least what Seely thinks is a scientific objection). Given that the water mentioned in Genesis 7:11 was a major contributor to the Flood (albeit secondary to the bursting open of the "fountains of the great deep"), Seely claims that "even the heaviest of ordinary rains would be insignificant." This leads Seely to the conclusion that the water must have come from elsewhere, such as the waters above the expanse. Seely's reasoning, however, is flawed on several counts. Firstly, Genesis 7:12 states that it rained for 40 days and 40 nights. I fail to see how so much water dumping on the earth for so long can be regarded as insignificant, especially since local floods in modern times have covered extensive regions with far less rainfall. Secondly, Seely is assuming that only "ordinary" rains are in view here. Given the context (i.e., God's judgment of the entire earth by means of the Flood), this assumption is completely without justification. God told Noah that He would bring Floodwaters upon the earth to destroy it (Genesis 6:17) so this was no ordinary flood – it was a supernatural act of God. This is further shown by God's promise never to send another Flood "to destroy the earth" (Genesis 9:11). Thirdly, the fact it rained for 40 days and 40 nights – an extraordinary amount of time – also indicates this event was a supernatural act of God. Thus, to view the rains as merely ordinary rains totally violates the context.

Indeed, the blessing promised in Mal. 3:10 to be poured out through "the floodgates of heaven" almost certainly is rain. E.g., Douglas Stuart, "Malachi" in *The Minor Prophets*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 3:1370-1371; David L. Peterson, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, Old

As to the waters above the firmament, Seely is absolutely correct. Those waters were literally taken up into the angelic heaven, where they form the sea of glass/ice/crystal. . . .

The waters beyond the firmament are on the other side of outer space, in heaven. I am not at all sure that heaven is a place that can be reached by travel in a spaceship; rather it seems to exist in "another dimension," so that when heaven is opened, it is very near to people who see into it. The starry universe is, however, finite. . . . Thus, while modern science shows us a vastly deeper firmament than the ancients believed in, that firmament is still bounded, and in some sense heaven is on the other side of it.<sup>142</sup>

**GEN. 1:9-13 – God created dry land and the seas. At his command, the land sprouted vegetation, more specifically, varieties of seed-bearing plants and fruit trees, which reproduce according to their kinds. There was evening and there was morning, the third day.**

The waters covering the earth are gathered together in "one place," as the land is made to appear. As Wenham notes, "The 'one place' is in contrast to an implied 'every place' when the waters covered the whole earth. It is not that the OT envisages all the water being gathered into a single ocean, as the mention of seas in v. 10 makes clear."<sup>143</sup> The water is in "one place" in the sense it is all now in the realm of the sea, the place decreed for it by God. This creative act is reversed in the Flood, where God judges sin by returning the earth to its submerged state.

However the separation of the land and seas was accomplished, the massive tectonic changes would, from a naturalistic perspective, render the land inhospitable to plant life for quite some time. But God, in his mighty power, dispelled the heat and did whatever else was necessary to make the land ready for vegetation that same day. As

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Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 217-218; Pieter A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 308. Seely recognizes that this rain does not come from the waters above the expanse, since he claims that the time of Noah's flood was the *only* time that the waters above entered this world. Seely (1992), 34.

<sup>141</sup> As Luther wrote in his *Lectures on Genesis* (1535), "It cannot be denied that, as Moses says, there are waters above the heavens, but I readily confess that I do not know of what sort those waters are." Jaroslav Pelikan, ed., *Luther's Works* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1958), 1:31. Young shared Luther's view. See, Seely (1992), 39.

<sup>142</sup> Jordan, 230-231. Holding (p. 50) suggests that these waters were the building blocks from which all that is beyond our atmosphere or solar system were created. Contra Holding's view, see Keil and Delitzsch, 53 (n. 1).

<sup>143</sup> Wenham, 20.

MacArthur states, "If the laws of nature set limits on the creative power of God, we might as well rule out miracles altogether. But the laws of nature place no limit on what God can do (Genesis 18:14; Jeremiah 32:27)."<sup>144</sup>

As most modern commentators recognize, vv. 11-12 refer to two distinct types of vegetation rather than three. Though *desœe'* usually just means grass, it is here a generic term ("vegetation") for the specified subcategories of seed-bearing plants and fruit trees. Mathews's comment is representative: "The vegetation is of two kinds, expressed in general categories: (1) plants producing seed and (2) fruit trees whose fruit possesses seeds."<sup>145</sup> Sailhamer adds, "The selectivity of the Creation account can be seen in the fact that it focuses only on the 'seed-bearing plants' and 'fruit trees.' Those are the plants that are for man's food [v.29]. No other forms of vegetation are mentioned."<sup>146</sup>

The significance of "kinds" is expressed well by Mathews:

The vegetation, like the waters, is given prescribed boundaries: they reproduce "according to their various kinds." "Kind" (*min*) is used for broad categories of animals, birds, and fish (e.g., 1:21,24-25; 6:20; 7:14). Any attempt to correlate "kind" with a modern term, such as "species," is unwarranted, though the awareness of distinctive "kinds" is closer to a "scientific" description than is found in pagan cosmogonies. Just as "separations" are integral to creation, so are distinctions among living beings as indicated by their "kinds." Creation and procreation according to "kind" indicates that God has established parameters for creation. But the term is never used of humanity, showing that we are a unique order of creation. Furthermore, ethnic distinctions are incidental to the commonality of the human family.<sup>147</sup>

**GEN. 1:14-19 – God created the heavenly lights to give light on the earth, thereby delegating to them the regulation of day and night, and to serve as markers for seasons, days, and years. There was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.**

Some advocates of the day-age view claim that the fourth day describes not the actual creation of the heavenly bodies but only their coming into sight after having been

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<sup>144</sup> MacArthur, 93.

<sup>145</sup> Mathews, 152. See also, Cassuto, 40; Wenham, 20-21; Sarna, 9; Hamilton, 126 (more cautiously); Sailhamer (1990), 31-33; and A. Ross, 110. This understanding is reflected in NASB, NIV, JB, REB, and NRSV.

<sup>146</sup> Sailhamer (1990), 31.

<sup>147</sup> Mathews, 152-153. See also, Wenham, 21; Hamilton, 126.

created on the first day.<sup>148</sup> This seems most unlikely. As Mathews recognizes, "The expression 'let there be' (v.14) probably indicates a new creative act as it does in vv. 3 and 6." He adds that "there is no sense that they were once hidden and only now appear; contrast the language of the appearance of dry land in v. 9."<sup>149</sup> Kline is even more forceful:

Any such view is falsified by the language of the text, which is plainly that of actual production: "Let there be and God made and God set (lit., gave)." The attempt to override this language cannot be passed off as just another instance of phenomenological description. The proposed evasive tactic involves a very different notion -- not just the general denominating of objects according to their everyday observed appearance at any and all times, but the relating of a specific event at a particular juncture in the creation process as though witnessed by an observer of the course of events, someone who at the moment reached on day four is supposed to catch sight of the luminaries, hitherto somehow hidden, perhaps by clouds. Disclaimers notwithstanding, this proposal is guilty of foisting an unwarranted meaning on the language affirming God's making and positioning of the luminaries. In the accounts of the other days, everybody rightly recognizes that the same language of divine fiat and creative fulfillment signifies the bringing into existence of something new, not just a visual detecting of something that was there all the while. There is no more excuse for reducing divine acts of production into human acts of perception in day four than there would be elsewhere.<sup>150</sup>

The related attempt to interpret "made" in v. 16 and "set" in v. 17 as pluperfects ("had made" and "had set") is misguided. Feinberg writes:

Kline argues cogently that this won't work, for the consistent pattern in Genesis 1 is a divine *fiat* followed by the phrase "and it was so."

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<sup>148</sup> E.g., H. Ross, 149-151; Archer (1994), 202; Stoner, 127-131. Sailhamer, who does not subscribe to the day-age view, also argues that the heavenly bodies were not made on day four. But he claims the luminaries were "appointed" to their purpose (or their purpose was announced) on that day, not that they became visible on that day. Sailhamer (1990), 33-34; Sailhamer (1996), 129-135. See also, Collins (1999), 135; Collins (1994), 123 (n. 55). Sailhamer (1996) (p. 130) acknowledges, however, that the creation of the sun, moon and stars on the fourth day "appears to be the plain meaning of the text."

<sup>149</sup> Mathews, 153 (n. 155).

<sup>150</sup> Meredith G. Kline, "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 48 (1996), 8. Similarly, Feinberg states (p. 612), "we need an explanation of why the *fiat* command on this day means existing things are to be revealed when it has no such meaning on the other days, despite the fact that the verb, its force, and form are the same for each day." On the attempt by Sailhamer (1990) (p. 33-34) to distinguish the syntax of v. 14, see Benjamin Shaw, "The Literal Day Interpretation" in *Did God Create in Six Days?* ed. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall (Taylors, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1999), 210-212; Andrew Kulikovsky, "Unbinding the Rules," *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 14 (No. 3, 2000), 36; Jordan, 162-165.

After this, the writer details what occurred on that day. Verses 14-17 follow this pattern, so if the verbs in verses 16-17 are pluperfect, then they occur prior to the *fiat* of verses 14 and 15a, and of course that is impossible. . . . [I]f one introduces the pluperfect into the verbs of verses 16-17, why not do the same for verbs dealing with activities on the other days of creation, since they are all in the same basic tense? Of course, that would require the absurdity that none of the events listed for any of the days happened on those days, but occurred previously. If that is what Moses means, however, why bother detailing specific events for each day, if the events don't happen on that day?<sup>151</sup>

The attempt to interpret "made" in v. 16 and "set" in v. 17 as a reference to the heavenly bodies being "appointed" to their purpose fares no better. Jordan rightly asks, "What does it mean for God to appoint the sun to this task on the fourth day if the sun already had this task from the first day?"<sup>152</sup> As Kline points out, this is no more justified than claiming that the statement on day two "that God made the firmament may be reduced to the idea that a previously existing firmament began to perform its stated purpose of dividing between the waters above and below (Gen. 1:6, 7)." He adds, "Moreover, this minimalist view of day four would share the fatal flaw of all views that eliminate the forming of the luminaries from the happenings of day four: it would leave day four with no new contribution, for all the functions mentioned there are already said to be operative in day one."<sup>153</sup>

Accordingly, Keil and Delitzsch write, "At the creative word of God the bodies of light came into existence in the firmament, as lamps."<sup>154</sup> Young writes, "That the heavenly bodies are made on the fourth day and that the earth had received light from a source other than the sun is not a naive conception, but is a plain and sober statement of the truth."<sup>155</sup> Von Rad labels the fourth day "creation of the stars."<sup>156</sup> Wenham states that in vv. 14-19 "[t]he creation of the sun, moon, and stars is described at much greater length than anything save the creation of man."<sup>157</sup> Hamilton writes, "Gen. 14ff. is saying

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<sup>151</sup> Feinberg, 606.

<sup>152</sup> Jordan, 164.

<sup>153</sup> Kline (1996), 8-9.

<sup>154</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, 56.

<sup>155</sup> Young (1963), 161.

<sup>156</sup> Von Rad, 55.

<sup>157</sup> Wenham, 21. The description may be so detailed because it is a polemic against Near Eastern exaltation of astral bodies. But as noted above, such an emphasis "does not diminish in the least the biblical author's intention to write an account that has a literal intent to provide factual and historical information." Hasel (1994), 36 (n. 77), referring to Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Polemical Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," *Evangelical Quarterly* 46 (1974), 81-102.

that these luminaries are not eternal; they are created, not to be served but to serve."<sup>158</sup> Mathews writes, "On this day the luminaries are created and placed in the heavens, paralleling 'light' decreed on the first day."<sup>159</sup>

**GEN. 1:20-23 – God created all the kinds of sea creatures and birds, blessed them, and instructed them to multiply. There was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.**

As Keil and Delitzsch note, "it is not stated that only a single pair was created of each kind." On the contrary, the indication is that "the animals were created, not only in a rich variety of genera and species, but in large numbers of individuals."<sup>160</sup>

The sea creatures are divided into two categories: "(1) extremely large and mostly-water related mammals or reptiles (crocodile, whale, large snakes; hence RSV 'the great sea monsters'); and (2) smaller fish and other more diminutive aquatic creatures, who either glide through the water or creep along its bed."<sup>161</sup>

The word "birds" (‘o,p) is literally "flying creatures." It can, however, refer specifically to birds (e.g., Gen. 8:20; Lev. 1:14; Deut. 28:26; Ezek. 29:5), which is how most understand it here.<sup>162</sup>

It is often noted that the verb *ba,,ra,,* ("create") is used in v. 21 (in reference to the great sea creatures) for the first time since v. 1. Perhaps it is used to emphasize God's sovereignty over these creatures in contrast to pagan creation myths.<sup>163</sup> Another suggestion is that the word is used at this point "to mark the beginning of a new stage in

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<sup>158</sup> Hamilton, 127.

<sup>159</sup> Mathews, 153.

<sup>160</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, 61. This is not to say that "kinds" equate to modern genera or species.

<sup>161</sup> Hamilton, 129. These categories would include extinct groups, such as aquatic dinosaurs.

<sup>162</sup> E.g., AV, RSV, NASB, NIV, NEB, REB, NRSV, ESV. Commentators include Keil and Delitzsch, 60-61; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 4; Wenham, 3; Hamilton, 129; Mathews, 156. Carl Schultz, "[Wu," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:655, writes: "Used with *sheres* [‘o,p) designates clean and unclean winged insects (ASV 'winged creeping things'). Lev 11:20-23 obviously refers to insects with four legs, perhaps counted in addition to the hind legs used in leaping."

<sup>163</sup> E.g., Wenham, 24; A. Ross, 111; Mathews, 156-157. But the emphasis must be subtle, because as 1:26-27 and 2:4 indicate, *ba,,ra,,* and ‘a,,sa, "are virtual synonyms." Mathews, 160.

the Creation, namely, the creation of the 'living beings,' a group distinct from the vegetation and physical world of the previous days (von Rad, Westermann)."<sup>164</sup>

It is also common to note that v. 22 is the first occasion of a divine "blessing." Mathews comments:

This blessing indicates that the creatures are in a favored position before the Lord. . . . Here at creation, by this simple dictum, God provides these creatures with the security of a continued existence. The animal world is valued by God and is placed under the caretaking of humans (1:26-28). The startling reversal of God's attitude toward his world of creatures by the flood exhibits the enormity of the world's corruption (6:17; 7:22-23). Nevertheless, his renewed covenant with the world includes these creatures who will again "be fruitful and multiply in number" (8:17).<sup>165</sup>

**GEN. 1:24-31 – God created all the kinds of land creatures and made mankind (male and female) in his image. He blessed the man and woman and commanded them to multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it, and to rule over the other creatures. He gave mankind seed-bearing plants and fruit for food and gave the land creatures every green plant for food. There was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.**

The land creatures are classified into three main groups commonly translated cattle, creeping things, and wild animals (or beasts) of the earth.<sup>166</sup> The claim by Hugh Ross that the phrase *nep,esCE h£ayya*, ("living creatures") in vv. 20, 21, and 24 restricts the meaning of *remesÃ* ("creeping things") in vv. 24-25 to short-legged land mammals is groundless.<sup>167</sup>

Contrary to Ross, the phrase *nep,esCE h£ayya*, does not mean "soulful creatures, creatures that can relate to humans; creatures with qualities of mind, will, and emotion." Indeed, in 1:20 the phrase is used in apposition to the swarming things of the

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<sup>164</sup> Sailhamer (1990), 35. Also Sarna, 10. As Jordan points out (p. 167-168), the use of *ba,ra,*' creates another problem for Sailhamer's limited-geography view, which posits that all creatures (except humans) were created on the first day, in that it cannot mean merely "appoints" or "sets up."

<sup>165</sup> Mathews, 158-159.

<sup>166</sup> E.g., RSV, NASB, NIV, REB (omits "of the earth"), NRSV. Sarna (p. 11) translates "cattle, creeping things, and wild beasts." Wenham (p. 25) calls them "domestic, wild, and small animals." Mathews (p. 160) labels them "domesticated cattle, crawlers, and wild animals." Sailhamer's (1990) (p. 36) uses "livestock," "creatures that move along the ground," and "wild animals."

<sup>167</sup> H. Ross, 151-152. He makes the claim in an attempt to correlate Genesis with the fossil record. Since reptiles appear before birds and sea mammals in the fossil record, Ross needs to exclude reptiles from the creatures created on day six. This leaves him room to claim that reptiles actually were created earlier but simply not mentioned.



sea, what Hamilton describes as "smaller fish and other more diminutive aquatic creatures, who either glide through the water or creep along its bed."<sup>168</sup> According to Wenham, "This comprehensive term [nep,esCE h£ayya,] is used here [v. 20] of water creatures, in v 24 of land animals, in 9:10 of birds and land animals, and 9:16 of man and animals; in other words, of all animate creation in which there is 'the breath of life' (hyj vpn; 1:30)."<sup>169</sup> Sarna writes, "Hebrew nefesh h£ayyah means literally 'animate life,' that which embodies the breath of life."<sup>170</sup> Mathews writes, "The traditional rendering of nepesCE is 'soul,' generally regarded as the immaterial portion of a person, but here [v. 20-21] the context requires the term as a generic word for 'creature' ('living being,' 2:7)."<sup>171</sup>

*RemesÃ* refers to a category of land animals that are distinguished by their mode of locomotion. That category includes, by specific identification in the biblical text or clear inference from the text, spotted lizards, dabb lizards, chameleons, geckos, skinks, mice, rats, snakes, snails, slugs, centipedes, millipedes, scorpions, and spiders.<sup>172</sup> Thus, Sarna states that "creeping things" is "[a] general term for creatures whose bodies appear to move close to the ground. Here it seems to encompass reptiles, creeping insects, and very small animals."<sup>173</sup> Wenham writes, "'creeping things' refers to mice, reptiles, insects, and any other little creatures that keep close to the ground."<sup>174</sup>

Ross's attempt to restrict further the animals created on day six to "three specific classes of land mammals . . . [that] were designed to coexist with human beings" is likewise without basis.<sup>175</sup> It is not clear what he means by "designed to *coexist* with humans," but it is apparent from the classification that not all these creatures were "domestic." And as Whitekettle shows, in Israelite thought (as reflected in the Hebrew

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<sup>168</sup> Hamilton, 129. These categories would include extinct groups, such as aquatic dinosaurs.

<sup>169</sup> Wenham, 24.

<sup>170</sup> Sarna, 10.

<sup>171</sup> Mathews, 156.

<sup>172</sup> See, Richard Whitekettle, "Rats are Like Snakes, and Hares are Like Goats: A Study in Israelite Land Animal Taxonomy," *Biblica* 82 (2001), 345-348. Following Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 3 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1991), 687, he takes *remesÃ* and *sCEeres£* (in reference to land creatures) as synonyms.

<sup>173</sup> Sarna, 10.

<sup>174</sup> Wenham, 25.

<sup>175</sup> H. Ross, 152. Again, he makes this claim in an attempt to correlate Genesis with the fossil record. Since land mammals appear before sea mammals in the fossil record, Ross needs to restrict the scope of mammals created on day six to leave room to claim that other mammals were created earlier but simply not mentioned.

Bible), land animals were divided into two basic classifications based on mode of locomotion.<sup>176</sup> The fact both classes are included in the creation on day six is an indication of comprehensiveness. Indeed, "it is obvious that the intent is to include all the various kinds of land animals."<sup>177</sup> Moreover, all mammals fit within the two categories (appear to move *along* the ground or *over* the ground), so there is no reason to think that some would be excluded. The contrary suggestion is driven by something other than exegetical concerns.<sup>178</sup>

Human beings are created in the "image and likeness of God" (Gen. 1:26-27, 5:1, 9:6), a description that is applied to no other creature. Scripture does not elaborate on the meaning of the phrase, but it would convey to the original readers that humans were created with a resemblance to God. God, of course, is spirit (Jn. 4:24), and the Old Testament stresses his incorporeality and invisibility (see, Ex. 20:1-4; Deut. 4:15-16), so the resemblance no doubt relates to some nonphysical aspect(s) of humanity.

Several elements of our nature seem to distinguish us from animals, but without scriptural guidance it is impossible to be certain which are intended. Perhaps the most fundamental difference is self-transcendence, the capacity to make oneself and the world the object of reflection. Other aspects of our uniqueness, some of which flow from self-transcendence, include moral and spiritual awareness, creativity, and abstract reasoning. We also have a unique capacity for worship, love, fellowship, and emotional experience.<sup>179</sup>

Whatever the precise nature of our divine resemblance, it apparently makes us God's representative on earth, in the way ancient oriental kings were understood to represent God. Mankind was made God's vice-regent and was given the royal task of ruling creation (Gen. 1:26-28; Ps. 8:3-8). Wenham remarks, "Whereas Egyptian writers often spoke of kings as being in God's image, they never referred to other people in this way. It appears that the OT has democratized this old idea. It affirms that not just a king, but every man and woman, bears God's image and is his representative on earth."<sup>180</sup>

The image of God is sometimes defined in terms of this role of God's representative, but that "merely describes the function or the consequences of the divine image; it does not pinpoint what the image is in itself."<sup>181</sup> Erickson writes:

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<sup>176</sup> Whitekettle, 345-348.

<sup>177</sup> Aalders, 68.

<sup>178</sup> The claim that certain mammals (those preceding sea mammals in the fossil record) were created without comment on day five runs afoul not only of the comprehensiveness of the day-six account but also of the specificity of the day-five account. The narrative of day five speaks specifically and exclusively of sea creatures and air creatures (birds). This implicitly excludes creation of living things in the separate "realm" of the land.

<sup>179</sup> Though these elements may not be manifest in embryonic life, that life is still uniquely sacred because it possesses them in germ form.

<sup>180</sup> Wenham, 31.

The image is something in the very nature of man, in the way in which he was made. It refers to something man *is* rather than to something he *has* or *does*. By virtue of his being man, he is in the image of God; it is not dependent upon the presence of anything else. By contrast, the focus of the relational and functional views is actually on consequences or applications of the image rather than on the image itself. Although very closely linked to the image of God, experiencing relationships and exercising dominion are not themselves that image.<sup>182</sup>

Since the image of God is an inherent aspect of human nature, it was not lost through the introduction of sin into the human world. This is almost certainly the point of Gen. 5:1-3. The likeness of God that stamped Adam (and Eve) was perpetuated in his offspring, despite the corruption of sin.

The continuing presence of the image of God is apparent from Gen. 9:6 where post-flood man is still referred to as bearing the image of God. In Jas. 3:9, James condemns the use of the tongue to curse people on the basis that humans are made in the likeness of God. In 1 Cor. 11:7 Paul says that a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God. Jesus also made this point implicitly in Mk. 12:13-17 (see also, Mat. 6:26, 12:12).<sup>183</sup>

Hamilton summarizes well the verses relating to God's provision of food:

What God creates he preserves. What he brings into being he provides for. Man is to have as his food the seed and fruit of plants. Animals and birds are to have the leaves. (The latter point accords with the description of the eschatological age when "the lion shall eat straw like the ox," Isa. 11:7; 65:25.) At no point is anything (human beings, animals, birds) allowed to take the life of another living being and consume it for food. The dominion assigned to the human couple over the animal world does not include the prerogative to butcher. Instead, humankind survives on a vegetarian diet. What is strange, and probably unexplainable (from a scientific position), is the fact that the animals too are not carnivorous but also vegetarians.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Wenham, 32.

<sup>182</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 513.

<sup>183</sup> For further discussion of "the image and likeness of God," see Wenham, 29-32; Hamilton, 134-138; Mathews, 164-172.

<sup>184</sup> Hamilton, 140. Similarly, Keil and Delitzsch write (p. 65):

From [vv. 29-30] it follows, that, according to the creative will of God, men were not to slaughter animals for food, nor were animals to prey upon one another; consequently, that the fact which now prevails universally in nature and the order of the world, the violent and often painful destruction of life, is not a primary law of nature, nor

The absence of a blessing on the land animals has generated much comment. Wenham writes:

Whereas birds and fish (v 22) and man (v 28) are blessed and told to be fruitful, no such command is given to the animals. Of the suggested explanations, two seem plausible: either the land animals are not told to multiply lest they compete with man and endanger his survival (cf. Exod 23:29; Lev 26:22; Jacob, 56) or more probably, because the blessing on man (v 28) covered all the works of the sixth day, including the land animals (so most recently Westermann, 1:141-42).<sup>185</sup>

**GEN. 2:1-3 – God rested on the seventh day from all the work of creation that he had done and blessed that day and made it holy.**

God "rested" in the sense he abstained or ceased from the work of creation that he completed on day six.<sup>186</sup> Allen Ross writes, "The word actually means 'cease,' more than 'rest' as understood today. It is not a word that refers to remedying exhaustion after a tiring week of work. Rather, it describes the enjoyment of accomplishment, the celebration of completion."<sup>187</sup>

God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, but no mention is made in Genesis of a Sabbath (a rest) for man. The seventh-day rest of Genesis focuses exclusively on

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a divine institution founded in the creation itself, but entered the world along with death at the fall of man, and became a necessity of nature through the curse of sin.

Mathews comments (p. 175), "God is depicted as the beneficent Provider, who insures food for both man and animal life without fear of competition or threat for survival." See also, Wenham, 33-34, who notes that meat eating may be envisaged from the time of the fall, in which case "9:3 is ratifying the post-fall practice of meat-eating rather than inaugurating it." According to von Rad (p. 61), the universal vegetarianism indicated in these verses is "the only suggestion of the paradisiacal peace in the creation as it came God-willed from God's hand." Oddly, Sailhamer (1990) fails to comment on these verses.

<sup>185</sup> Wenham, 26.

<sup>186</sup> Mathews, 178; Wenham, 35.

<sup>187</sup> A. Ross, 113-114. See also, Kidner, 53. This "rest" is described in Ex. 20:11 by the word *nu,ah£*, which includes the meaning "to cease activity." John N. Oswalt, "j^Wn," in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis CD-ROM*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998). To say that God's statement in Ex. 31:17 that he was "refreshed" (*nap,,asCE*) is anthropomorphic still leaves the question of what he meant. In what way was he refreshed that is analogous to human refreshment? MacArthur comments (p. 184), "To say that God was 'refreshed' does not imply that He was rejuvenated by regaining lost energy. Rather, the sense of it is that He paused to delight in His works. He was 'refreshed' by delight and satisfaction in what He had done." See also, Keil and Delitzsch, 68; Pipa, 171; Kelly, 238. In that sense, it accords with A. Ross's remark about *sCEa,,bat* in Gen. 2:2-3.

God.<sup>188</sup> There is no command for man to observe anything regarding the seventh day. In fact, the word *Sabbath*, which is the name given to the commanded observance of the seventh day by Israelites, is never used in Genesis. As Sarna observes:

The human institution of the Sabbath does not appear in the narrative. . . . [A]s we read in Exodus 31:13, 16, and 17, the Sabbath is a distinctively Israelite ordinance, a token of the eternal covenant between God and Israel. Its enactment would be out of place before the arrival of Israel on the scene of history.<sup>189</sup>

Sabbath observance is first mentioned in Ex. 16:21-30, where it seems the Israelites were not familiar with it. This is consistent with the fact there is no mention of anyone observing the Sabbath prior to that time. In Ex. 20:8-11 Israel is commanded to remember the Sabbath day, in imitation of God's conduct in creation, by keeping it as a special day separate from every other day and dedicated to God. Exodus 20:11 explains that God *at that time* (not at creation) blessed and sanctified the *Sabbath day* (the name of the seventh day as a day of rest *for man*) because it was analogous to the day of divine rest that he previously had blessed and sanctified at creation.<sup>190</sup>

This understanding of Ex. 20:11 is supported by two considerations. First, Deut. 5:15 says the Sabbath commandment is based on a prior historical event: because God rescued the Israelites from Egypt, he therefore commanded them at Sinai to keep the Sabbath. Reading Ex. 20:11 in a parallel manner yields: because God rested at creation, he therefore blessed the Sabbath at Sinai.

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<sup>188</sup> What is probably blessed and sanctified in Gen. 2:2-3 is not simply the seventh day as a day of the week but the seventh day as a representation of God's rest, the goal toward which creation moves. It is a sign pointing to the ultimate rest of the people of God. As Lincoln comments:

The climax of God's creative activity is not the creation of male and female so much as his own triumphant rest. It is true that His blessing and hallowing of the seventh day are not meant to be considered simply in a vacuum but have some relation to the created world. What is crucial, however, is the nature of that relation. The seventh day is to be seen as representing the completion of the whole creation, and therefore in its blessing the whole creation is blessed. . . . Creation, therefore, is blessed with special reference to its goal, God's rest, which is set apart in some sense for all His creation including man and woman; but the precise sense awaits further unfolding. . . .

The framework of Genesis 1 and 2 certainly indicates that there is a divine ordering of history, so that, as history moves toward its consummation, it moves toward the goal of God's rest. A. T. Lincoln, "From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical and Theological Perspective," in D. A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 348-349.

<sup>189</sup> Sarna, 14.

<sup>190</sup> So as Sarna remarks (p. 14), "there cannot be any doubt that [Gen. 2:1-3] provides the unspoken foundation for the future institution of the Sabbath."

Second, the Hebrew particle used in Ex. 20:11 and Deut. 5:15 and translated "therefore" is normally used "in the Pentateuch to connect causally an event in the past with a situation some time later (cf. Gen. 2:24; 25:20; 42:21; 47:22; Exod. 13:15; Num. 21:27; Deut. 24:18); hence, it is better translated 'consequently now' (in the sense of *post hoc* ['after this'] and *propter hoc* ['on account of this'])."<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Harold H. P. Dressler, "The Sabbath in the Old Testament," in D. A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 38 (n. 43).

## APPENDIX: The Age of Mankind

The biblical keys to dating the age of mankind (and thus the age of creation) are the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11. Using the Masoretic text, these reveal that just under 2000 years elapsed from Adam to Abraham. Alternative textual possibilities from the LXX and Samaritan text could expand this another 1400 years or so.<sup>192</sup>

Granting the possibility of gaps in these genealogies,<sup>193</sup> the extent to which they can further expand the time is limited. It seems clear from Genesis 4 - 11 that a gap is impossible between Adam and Seth, Lamech and Noah, Shem and Arphaxad, and Terah and Abraham. Jude declares (v. 14) that Enoch was the seventh from Adam, which indicates there also are no gaps between Seth and Enosh, Enosh and Kenan, Mahalalel and Jared, and Jared and Enoch.

When one considers that the genealogies include men (e.g., Kenan, Mahalalel, Serug) about whom no other information is given in Scripture, it seems unjustified to assert that vast numbers of generations were omitted for lack of significance. Moreover, the genealogies in 1 Chron. 1:1-4, 24-27 and Lk. 3:34-38 follow those of Genesis precisely, casting further doubt on the notion they are extremely fragmentary.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> See, e.g., Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Meaning of the Chronogenealogies in Genesis 5 and 11," *Origins* 7 (No. 2, 1980), 53-58; J. A. Young, "Septuagintal Versus Masoretic Chronology in Genesis 5 and 11," in Robert L. Ivey, Jr., ed., *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Creationism* (Pittsburgh, PA: Creation Science Fellowship, 2003), 417-430 (suggesting the primacy of Septuagintal ages in Genesis 5).

<sup>193</sup> That is, granting that the statement, "When X was 70 years old he begat Y" can mean "When X was 70 years old he begat the father/grandfather/great grandfather/etc. of Y." The seminal work on gaps in the genealogies is W. H. Green, "Primitive Chronology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 47 (April 1890), 285-303. See also, John H. Raven, *Old Testament Introduction* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1906), 134-135. However, Hasel (1980) argues strongly that the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 are distinctive and present a continuous line of descent. Jordan (p. 99) says of Green's claim of gaps: "Such a totally preposterous misreading of the text never occurred to anyone in the entire history of the Church before the late nineteenth century."

<sup>194</sup> Some manuscripts of Lk. 3:36 include an extra generation ("Cainan") between Arphaxad and Shelah. It seems likely, however, that "Cainan" was not in the original of Lk. 3:36. It is omitted in P75, a papyrus manuscript from the 3rd century (one of the oldest copies of this text), and in D, a 5th century uncial. Given the presence of "Cainan" (Greek for Kenan) in Lk. 3:37, it is understandable how a scribe could have repeated it accidentally in Lk. 3:36. See, Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 1:358-359.