

Days of Genesis 1: Literal or Nonliteral?

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An important issue in biblical exposition is whether the days of Genesis 1 should be regarded as literal twenty-four-hour days.¹ Interest in this issue shows no promise of subsiding.²

The writer's purpose herein is to discuss this issue, arguing that the author of Gen 1 understood these days as literal days. In pursuing this purpose he will discuss (1) reasons for belief both in literal and in nonliteral days; (2) the Day-Age theory; (3) the Days-of-Revelation Theory, and; (4) nonchronological interpretations—especially the Framework Hypothesis. The issue is *not* the date of creation or the age of the earth³—belief in creation in six days is compatible with belief in either recent or remote creation. The phrase “literal days” refers herein to twenty-four-hour days and “nonliteral days” to other periods of time for which “day” might be used. “Literalist” and “nonliteralist” are used in similar ways. The historicity and Mosaic authorship of Genesis are assumed.

History of Interpretation⁴

There has been a strong literalist trend among Christian expositors as far back as the early church and including most of the church fathers and the Protestant reformers. Jordan and Pipa hold, respectively, that before the modern era few questioned the literalist position, and that, “in 2000 years of exegetical history” no one argued until recently that the text taught that the days were long

¹ For a discussion of several perspectives on this issue see Raymond F. Surburg, in Paul A. Zimmerman, ed. *Darwin, Evolution, and Creation* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 57–64.

² Robert V. McCabe, “A Defense of the Literal Days in the Creation Week,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 5 (Fall, 2000): 97. McCabe reported that during the previous decade there had been a “proliferation” of articles on the literal-day issue.

³ The writer believes in a remote date for the creation of the cosmos and a recent date for the creative acts of Gen 1:3ff.

⁴ For summaries of the history of the interpretation of “day” in Gen 1 see Gerhard Hasel, “The ‘Days’ of Creation in Genesis 1,” *Origins* (Loma Linda University) 21:1 (1994): 6–10; J. Ligon Duncan III and David W. Hall (47–52, 99–106), and Hugh Ross and Gleason L. Archer (68–70), in David G. Hagopian, ed. *The G3n3s1s [sic] Debate* (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux, 2001).

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ages.⁵ Recently, literalists have included many Christian scholars—conservatives and liberals—and scientists who accept creationism. The recent renewal of interest in creationism has included reaffirmations of the literalist view.

As Hasel notes, reasons for nonliteralist views have been related mostly to extra-biblical concerns, such as a tendency in early Christianity to interpret the Scriptures in terms of Greek philosophy, and in the last 200+ years a “need” to harmonize Gen 1 with inferences of scientists and naturalists regarding the age of the earth and the origin of biological species. In 1994 Hasel reported that during the previous decade, “broad concordists” had been increasingly trying to interpret the days nonliterally.⁶

The question of literal days is an issue more among conservatives—who accept the creation account as historical but differ among themselves on the time element—than between conservatives and liberals. Those not committed to a creationist credo have no “need” to harmonize Gen 1 with science and can ignore the issue or accept a literalist position.⁷

The Meanings of *Yôm* (“Day”) in the Old Testament

The meanings of *yôm* in the OT include literal day, the sunlit portion of a day, and various defined or undefined periods of time. According to Stambaugh, while *yôm* can be used of long periods of time, its meaning in any passage must be determined by its context, not only by its semantic range. He asserts also that *yôm* in the plural could be used of periods of time such as “a few thousand years.”⁸

The meaning of *yôm* in many cases is modified, as by a prefixed preposition. Thus *b^eyôm*—“in the day”—has an adverbial force, and in many cases can be translated “when,” as in Gen 2:4: “when God created.” When referring to non-determinate future events, it can be translated “if” or “if ever,” as in Gen 2:17: “if you ever eat,” as in the CEV, the Living Bible, and a few other versions. The time referent of *b^eyôm* is not in every case a literal day. In Num 7:10, e.g., it refers to a twelve day period.

It should be noted that with or without a preposition, *yôm* can also refer to a period of time other than a normal day. *Yôm* is used in at least two and probably three senses in Gen 1 and 2.

⁵ John B. Jordan, *Creation in Six Days* (Moscow, ID: Canon, 1999), 17; Joseph A. Pipa, in Pipa and David W. Hall, *Did God Create in Six Days?* (Taylors, SC: Southern Presbyterian, 1999), 192.

⁶ Hasel, 9.

⁷ As Jordan, 22, also noted.

⁸ James Stambaugh, “The Days of Creation—a Semantic Approach,” *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 5 (1991), 75, 73.

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Arguments for the Literal Day View

The procedure here is (1) to discuss reasons advanced for the literal-day position; (2) to reply to several nonliteralist counter-arguments; and (3) to support the literalist arguments by appeal to lexicons, theological dictionaries, and commentaries.⁹

1. The Hermeneutical Principle Involved. According to a “widely accepted hermeneutical principle,” any passage in the Bible should be interpreted literally unless there is a good reason to interpret it figuratively. That is, it “should be taken literally if it makes sense and figuratively if the literal makes no sense.” Baker, Surburg, and Jordan find no reason in Gen 1 for figurative interpretation.¹⁰

2. Wording of the Text. A straightforward reading of Gen 1 suggests that literal days are intended. That Moses repeatedly used “day” instead of another word or phrase, such as “year” or “thousands of years,” indicates his belief in literal days.

According to Cassuto and Huston, the wording of Gen 1 suggests that each creative fiat was followed immediately by its implementation. In comments on 1:3, Cassuto holds that the fiat and the statement of its implementation were given the “tersest form” to show that the fiat was implemented “as soon as He commanded.” In comments on v. 11, he writes: “it was so instantly.”¹¹ This argument is somewhat weakened by the possibility that it was the certainty, not the immediacy, of the implementation that was emphasized.

3. Lack of Qualifiers of *Yôm*. When *yôm* refers to a period of time longer than a day, Hasel maintains, it is qualified by a preposition, a compound construction, or in some other way. “In other words, extended, nonliteral meanings” of *yôm* “have special linguistic and contextual connections which indicate clearly that a nonliteral meaning is intended.” When qualifiers are absent, as in Gen 1, *yôm* refers to a day of twenty-four hours.¹²

4. Creation Week and the Sabbath. It seems clear from Exod 20:11 that the work of creation was distributed over six days in order to provide for the week and the Sabbath. Would the wording of 20:11 make sense if the days were not real days? Gunkel held that the institution of day seven as the Sabbath would be “superfluous” if the days were not to be understood literally.¹³

⁹ For other discussions of the literal-day view see Hasel, 5–38; Terence Fretheim, in Ronald Youngblood, ed., *The Genesis Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 12–35; Stambaugh, 70–78; John M. Huston. *Origins in Genesis: Day-Ages or Six Literal Days?* MATS Thesis, Biola University, 1986; Duncan and Hall, with critical responses, in Hagopian, 21–119; McCabe, 97–124.

¹⁰ William H. Baker, *In the Image of God* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 25; Surburg, in Zimmerman, 59; Jordan, 111.

¹¹ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, Israel Abrahams, trans. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961, 1989), 1:26, 41; Huston, 29–30.

¹² Hasel, 23, 24.

¹³ Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*. Mark E. Biddle, trans. (Macon, GA: Mercer UP, 1997), 108. For similar statements see Surburg, in Zimmerman, 61, and John Benjamin Shaw, in Pipa and Hall, 217.

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The literalist force of Exod 20:11 cannot be destroyed by appealing to a parallel passage, Exod 31:17, which adds to 20:11 the idea that God was “refreshed” after creation. Some nonliteralists argue that because God never needs rest, “refreshed” must be considered as figurative, and the remainder of the passage and 20:11 must also be considered figurative. The “refreshing” could refer, however, not to needed rest, but to God’s delight in contemplating a completed creation¹⁴ or to His communion with beings newly created in His image.

Some nonliteralists hold that Exod 20:8–11 expresses the relation between ordinary days and “days” of creation as one not of identity, but of analogy. According to Collins, “The text [of Exod 20:8–11] in no way sets up any identity between the length of our work week and the length of God’s. . . .”¹⁵ Surburg, however, points out that six days of work followed by a day of rest by God “alone can furnish a consistent analogy” for working six days and resting on the seventh day.¹⁶

The idea is clear that human beings, by working six days and resting on the seventh, are to imitate the creative work and rest of God. Note that the identical pattern—work six days, abstain from work on the seventh day—and the idea of imitating God are displayed in the account of the creative work of giving, and the human work of gathering, the manna (Exod 16).

Last, it may be asked if Moses, in one short passage, would have used the word “days” in two radically different senses.

5. Days Defined as “Evening/morning.” Baker and Hasel agree that the “evening/morning” clause cannot be made to mean anything other than a literal day.¹⁷ Steinmann shows that *yôm ’eḥād* [“one day”] in Gen 1:5 should be seen as a definition of “evening and morning.” He translates the verse as follows: “God called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night.’ There was an evening and there was a morning: one day.”¹⁸ Stambaugh holds that “day,” when used with “evening and morning,” always means a literal day.¹⁹

Bradley, however, maintains that this argument cannot be used for literal days because if the days can be nonliteral days, the evening and morning can be other periods of time.²⁰ In reply, it may be said not only that the “evening/morning” clause refers to literal days, but that Moses used it to emphasize that each day was a literal day. Arguably, had Moses believed that the days were nonliteral days, he would not have used this clause.

¹⁴ Pipa, in Pipa and Hall, 171.

¹⁵ John Collins, in Pipa and Hall, 142.

¹⁶ Surburg, in Zimmerman, 61.

¹⁷ Baker, 25; Hasel, 28; see also August Dillmann, *Genesis Critically and Exegetically Expounded*. Wm. B. Stevenson, trans. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1897), 1:64.

¹⁸ Andrew E. Steinmann, “אֶחָד as an Ordinal Number and the Meaning of Genesis 1:5,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45/4 (December 2002): 577–584; quotation from 583.

¹⁹ Stambaugh, 72.

²⁰ Walter L. Bradley and Roger Olsen, in Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus, eds. *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 299–300.

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6. The Use of *Yôm* with a Numeral. *Yôm*, when modified by an ordinal numeral, refers to a literal day. Only Hos 6:2, Zech 14:7, and Amos 4:4 have been cited as exceptions to this practice, which is always followed, according to Pipa and Whitcomb, in, respectively, the Pentateuch and historical books.²¹ According to Newman, “no clear counter-example” of *yôm* with a numeral indicating a long period of time can be cited.²² Fretheim holds that in a series of numbered days, as in Num 29, *yôm* always refers to “a normal day.”²³

7. Views of Lexicographers, Expositors, etc. Hasel declares that many scholars have held the literalist view and that no lexicographers have departed from it.²⁴ Inspection of lexicons, dictionaries, etc., confirms Hasel’s statement: none of about ten such works consulted by the writer argues against the literalist position—except for TWOT, which holds that the length of the days is “indeterminable.”²⁵ Koehler and Baumgartner (HALOT),²⁶ *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (DCH),²⁷ and *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (TLOT)²⁸ define *yôm* in Gen 1:5, and DCH and TLOT in the parallel passages also, as a day of twenty-four hours. The *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (NIDOTTE) indicates that *yôm* is used in 1:5 of “the complete cycle that includes both daytime and nighttime.”²⁹

Literal expositors include von Rad, Dillmann, Gunkel, Dods, Leupold, and Wenham. Von Rad maintains that “the seven days are unquestionably to be understood as actual days.” Dillmann agrees: “In truth, Moses thought of nothing else than days.”³⁰ According to Dods, if “day” in Gen 1, 2 does not refer to a normal day, “the interpretation of Scripture is hopeless.”³¹

²¹ Pipa, in Pipa and Hall, 183; John C. Whitcomb, *The Early Earth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972), 27.

²² Robert C. Newman and Herman J. Eckelmann, Jr., *Genesis One & the Origin of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979), 63, 61.

²³ Fretheim, in Youngblood, 19.

²⁴ Hasel, 22.

²⁵ *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, R. Laird Harris, ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:371.

²⁶ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, rev. Baumgartner and Johannes J. Stamm, trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 2:399.

²⁷ *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, David A. Clines, ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998–), 4:166.

²⁸ *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, eds. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 2:528. English trans. of *THAT*.

²⁹ *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Willem A. van Gemmeren, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 2:420.

³⁰ Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, J. H. Marks, trans. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 63; Dillmann, 1:64; see also Gunkel, 108.

³¹ Marcus Dods, *Genesis (Expositor’s Bible)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 1:4. See also H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1936), 1:56; Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1–15 (Word Biblical Commentary)*, (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 19.

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Those arguing for literal days as the textual intention have also included many university professors. According to Surburg, Arthur Custance asked qualified professors at nine leading universities, including Oxford and Harvard, how *yôm* in Gen 1 should be translated. All those who replied said: “as a day as commonly understood.”³² James Barr reports that he knows of no “professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university” who does not believe that the writer of Gen 1 intended to say “creation took place in six days of 24 hours.”³³ Barr himself appears to have accepted the literal position: “In fact, the only natural exegesis is a literal one in the sense that this is what the author intended.” He states, nevertheless, that it is only “extreme fundamentalists” who assert that a literal interpretation is “obligatory or even desirable.”³⁴ Last, Huston lists by their last names fifty-one scholars and scientists, of whom thirty accepted the literal-day view and twenty-one the Day-Age Theory.

Arguments for the Nonliteral View

The nonliteral position is stated effectively by Dick Fischer: “Any thoughtful person who would examine the Scriptural evidence alone should be able to conclude that a day in God’s creation week was not intended to be interpreted as a 24-hour period.”³⁵ Also of interest is Norman Geisler’s statement that there are “many indications” in Scripture that the days were not literal days.³⁶

The collective attempt to discover in the Scriptures a rationale for the nonliteral position has been thoroughgoing.³⁷ Several nonliteral arguments are discussed here.

1. **Literary Genre.** Hasel discusses attempts to interpret Gen 1 in terms of a “literary genre.” He states that the use of this approach to Gen 1 “is meant to restrict the meaning of Genesis 1 to a thought-form which does not demand a factual, historical reading of what took place.” He reviews several genres proposed for Genesis and concludes that “there is no consensus on the literary genre of Genesis 1” and that this lack of consensus “makes the literary genre approach for a nonliteral reading of Genesis suspect of special pleading.” When Gen 1 is compared to the hymns, parables, poems, cultic liturgies of the Bible, he concludes, it proves to be none of these. Nor is it, he says, a metaphor or story, but rather “a historical-prose record, written in rhythmic style, recording factually

³² Surburg, in Zimmerman, 61, citing Arthur C. Custance, *Between the Lines* (Ottawa, 1957), 36.

³³ “Creation Interview,” *Creation Ex Nihilo* 7:1 (August, 1984), 28.

³⁴ Huston, 15; James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London: SCM, 1977), 42.

³⁵ Dick Fischer, *Origins Solution* (Lima, OH: Fairway, 1996), 162.

³⁶ Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 272.

³⁷ For further discussion of the non-literal view see Fischer, *Origins Solution*, 147–163; Hugh Ross, *The Fingerprint of God* (Orange, CA, Promise, 1991), 141–160; and R. Clyde McCone in Youngblood, 12–35, and others.

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and accurately” the creation of the heavens and the earth and when it took place.³⁸

Young supports Hasel, asserting that Genesis 1 is not poetry, saga, or myth, but straightforward, trustworthy history.³⁹

2. Appeal to 2 Peter 3:8 and Psalm 90:4. Those accepting a nonliteral view typically appeal to 2 Pet 3:8, which echoes Ps 90:4 when it states that “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” A critique of this position involves two points: (1) neither passage has a creation context; (2) each has a comparative particle—the relation between a day, or “an evening,” and “a thousand years” is a term of analogy, not of identity: a day is said to be like, not equal to, a thousand years.⁴⁰ Hasel holds, also, that “From contextual as well as grammatical-syntactical and semantic points of view the application of Psalm 90:4 to Gen 1 does not work. Appropriate linguistic and phraseological criteria of comparison are lacking.”⁴¹

3. Account of Day Three. Arguments for nonliteral days based on the account of day three have emerged. Norman Geisler argues for nonliteral days on the basis that the text says that vegetation not only was created, but also grew to maturity on this day.⁴² But because plants may have been created in various stages of growth, this argument should not be pushed vigorously. Meredith Kline also found difficulties in the account of the third day. These are discussed below in connection with the Framework Hypothesis.

4. Account of Day Four. To argue that days one through three were nonliteral days because the sun was not created until day four misses two points.

a. First, the text explicitly states that each of these days was evening and morning. Since light—however it may be explained—was created on day one, I see no problem with the statements regarding the evening-morning of days one through three.

b. Second, the length of a day can be determined with reference to a visible star.

5. Account of Day Six. The argument is that the events recorded in Gen 1 and 2 for day six could not all have taken place in one literal day. Day six and the other days, therefore, were not literal days.⁴³ Since this argument is obviously a “big gun” in the nonliteral arsenal, it is considered here at length.

How much time did these activities require? Arguably, God would have taken as little time for His activity as His purposes required. His instructions to

³⁸ Hasel, 15–21; see also Edward J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1964), 82–83.

³⁹ Young, 82–83.

⁴⁰ Fretheim, in Youngblood, 17; Hasel, 11, 12.

⁴¹ Hasel, 12.

⁴² Geisler, 272.

⁴³ P. J. Wiseman, *Creation Revealed in Six Days* (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1956), 124; Ross, *Fingerprint*, 150.

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Adam and Eve obviously took little time. The only human activity mentioned in the text (but not by all nonliteral expositors⁴⁴) is the naming of animals by Adam. The concern, then, is with the time required for the naming. How long this took is not stated. A brief analysis suggests that it may have been only a short time.

a. First, the text suggests that the animals referred to in 2:19 were created specifically for the naming,⁴⁵ instead of being brought in from various regions in a time-consuming operation.

b. Second, the number of animals named was probably relatively small. There are three (overlapping) reasons for this belief:

(1) The purpose in the naming did not require a large number of animals. This purpose, almost certainly, was to drive home to Adam a sense of his solitariness strong enough that he would come to feel deeply the need of a companion and would accept and appreciate her when she was presented to him.⁴⁶ The realization of this purpose would require perhaps a few hundred animals, if that many. There is no indication that Adam was called upon to formulate a comprehensive taxonomy of the animal kingdom.

(2) The animals named were restricted to certain kinds: birds, “cattle,” and “beasts of the field.” These categories included, certainly, birds, large land mammals, and probably bats and large land-dwelling and amphibious reptiles, such as tortoises, crocodilians, and dinosaurs. Excluded were marine and aquatic animals, invertebrates, and probably animals small enough to elude observation in the vegetation.

(3) The animals named may have been representatives of a relatively small number of basic kinds originally created, not the wide variety now existing, as biologist Frank Marsh has suggested.⁴⁷ (Arguably, the Creator would not have found it necessary to create, say, the 300+ species of parrots and hundreds of thousands of species of insects now recognized.) Some students, for various reasons, have tried to determine which modern taxon might correspond to the basic “kind” of Gen 1. Woodmorappe reviews a number of studies and concludes that “the preponderance of evidence” indicates that the created kind corresponds to the family of modern taxonomy, especially in the case of birds and

⁴⁴ Gleason Archer, for example. See Archer, in Radmacher and Preus, 325–27. Archer argues that the events of day six extended over many days.

⁴⁵ Cassuto, 1:129.

⁴⁶ Cassuto, 1:128, and other expositors, going back at least 145 years, have accepted, or allowed for, this explanation.

⁴⁷ Frank L. Marsh, *Studies in Creationism* (Washington: Review and Herald, 1950), 239. According to this concept, the animals were created as a small number of basic kinds and were divinely preadapted at creation with the capacity for limited adaptive change. As a consequence of this capacity, through natural processes, such as mutation and hybridism, many new forms of animals have come into existence, giving rise to more than a million species now recognized. This view is shared by other creationists.

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mammals.⁴⁸ If this conclusion and the related assumptions are correct, Adam named not more than a few hundred animals—there are now about 300 recognized families of mammals and birds, including some forms not said to have been named.

c. Adam named the animals quickly on the basis of their obvious gross anatomical features: size, color, prominent markings, etc. Given the purpose in the naming, careful, prolonged scrutiny of each animal to ensure that its name would be appropriate or permanent would not be necessary. Slowly-moving animals would not necessarily have caused delay.

d. If Adam had been informed that the naming would be followed by something superbly delightful, he would have tended to complete the naming as quickly as possible.

e. The Creator, certainly more interested in the reception to be accorded to Eve than in the names given to the animals, accepted each name immediately and may have kept things moving.

f. Regardless of all other factors, the naming may have been terminated if it became obvious before all of the designated animals had been named that its purpose had been realized.⁴⁹

The writer suggests, with support from Van Bebbler and Taylor, that the naming may have taken only a few hours. Jordan allows eight hours, but thinks this “probably far too long.”⁵⁰

Other attempts to “lengthen” day six beyond the limits of a literal day are no more convincing than the one just discussed. The writer sees no reason, therefore, to deny that all the events of day six could have been shoehorned into one day.

6. Alleged Indeterminate Length of the Seventh Day. Some argue that day seven of creation week was not a literal day, but a long period of time—God’s “long and as yet unended Sabbath of cessation from creative work.”⁵¹ This argument is based on the absence of the “evening/morning” clause from the account of day seven in Gen 2:2, 3. Since day seven was not a literal day but a long period of time, so the argument goes, the other days were also long periods. Unless, as McCone suggests, God intended to resume the work of creation, week by week, after the seventh day, His cessation from creative work would have continued beyond that day.⁵² McCone’s point is discussed below.

⁴⁸ John Woodmorappe, *Noah’s Ark: A Feasibility Study* (Santee, CA: Institute for Creation Research, 1996), 7. Harold Clark (*Creation Speaks* [Oakland: Pacific Press, 1950], 39) and Henry Morris (*The Biblical Basis of Modern Science* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984], 129) also hold that the family may be an equivalent of the original “kind.”

⁴⁹ This conclusion is supported by Mark van Bebbler and Paul S. Taylor, *Creation and Time* (Mesa, AZ: Eden, 1996), 81.

⁵⁰ Van Bebbler and Taylor, 82; Jordan, 47.

⁵¹ John B. Davis, *Genesis and Semitic Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980, rpt.), 17.

⁵² McCone, in Youngblood, 30–31.

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There are several objections to the idea that the seventh day of Gen 2:2 was of indeterminate length:

a. Arguably, the length of day seven was determined by the length of the other days. Surely the repeated “evening/morning” clause is a more convincing reason for believing that the days, including day seven, were literal days, than the absence of this clause with respect to day seven is for the view that day seven and therefore the other days were not literal days. As Fretheim notes, Gen 2:2, 3 seems to refer to a literal day: “In Genesis 2:3 God blesses and hallows that day, clearly indicating that it is a specified day that is set aside as a special holy day.”⁵³ Dillmann explains the omission of the “evening/morning” clause: “the narrative is at an end, there is no transition made to a further day . . .” He holds that day seven “cannot possibly be thought of as a day stretching on *in infinitum*.”⁵⁴

b. If day seven were a long period, it “would lose its character” as a type of the Sabbath, as maintained above.

c. McCone suggests that after “resting” from work on day seven, God may have resumed creative work in connection with another world. There are many stars in the local galaxy, and many galaxies. Conceivably, God has been engaged, and may still be engaged, in creative work on other worlds. If such is the case, His rest did not continue beyond the seventh day, and the nonliteralist argument from Gen 2:2 would have no force.⁵⁵

If God concluded His work of creating the cosmos with the creative work of Gen 1, as 2:1 possibly indicates, His “rest” from creative work would continue, regardless of whether or not the days of Gen 1 were literal days. We may then understand that God rested on a literal seventh day and sanctified it as a recurring rest day for human beings. Day seven could then be regarded not only as a literal day and a prototype of the Sabbath for human beings, but also as introducing God’s desistance from creative work until He creates “new heavens and a new earth”—in much the same way that January 1, 2001, was both a literal day and the beginning of a new millennium. This extended period of desistance from creative work—after day seven—would have no Sabbath significance.

7. Arguments from Gen 2:4. Hugh Ross and Fischer maintain that the use of the Hebrew words *tôl’dôt*—“generations” (KJV)—and *b’yôm* in Gen 2:4 indicates a long time span for creation week. They hold that *tôl’dôt*, because of the translation “generations,” must refer to a long period of time.⁵⁶

⁵³ Fretheim, in Youngblood, 20.

⁵⁴ Dillmann, 1:90–91, 92.

⁵⁵ The idea that God may have resumed creative work after day seven does not necessitate belief either in “a mythological concept of cyclical time” or that the work of creation would continue eternally. (Meredith G. Kline, “Space and Time in the Biblical Cosmogony,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith [PSCF]* 48:1 [March, 1996]: 10).

⁵⁶ Hugh Ross, *Creation and Time* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), 52; *Fingerprint*, 150–51; Fischer, *Origins Solution*, 151.

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It has been pointed out, however, that “generations” is a “misleading,” “inaccurate” translation of *tôl’dôt*.⁵⁷ Dictionaries list the following meanings for *tôl’dôt* in general: “generations,” “account of a man and his descendants,” “line of descendants,” “origin,” “begettings.”⁵⁸ In 2:4 *tôl’dôt* has been translated as follows: (a) the LXX has “*biblos geneseōs*,” that is, “account of origin”; (b) HALOT defends “the usual rendering”: “the history of the origin of heaven and earth”;⁵⁹ (c) Waltke has “the account of the heavens and the earth.”⁶⁰ The time referent of *tôl’dôt* in any of its occurrences is determined by the context—*tôl’dôt* does not determine this time referent. Obviously, we cannot, without prior acceptance of a nonliteral position, get long periods of time out of *tôl’dôt* in 2:4.

With reference to *b’yôm*, Fischer holds that since it includes the previous six days, it cannot be interpreted as a literal day—it is used figuratively, as “a time of indefinite length,” and equals six shorter periods of indefinite length.⁶¹

As noted above, *b’yôm* in some cases refers to periods of time longer than a day. Fischer ignores the fact that any period of time longer than a day consists necessarily of a number of literal days. That *b’yôm* does not refer to a literal day in 2:4 hardly means that *yôm* does not in chapter 1.

8. The Concept of “Heavenly Time” or “Days.” Some nonliteralists have argued for the existence of heavenly time, or days, as contrasted to earthly time, or days; the idea being that the days of creation week were “heavenly days” and not to be understood as literal days. Typically, support for this idea is drawn from 2 Pet 3:8, discussed above.

One argument for “heavenly days” is that, as the sanctuary of Israel was “a copy and shadow of what is in heaven” (Heb 8:5), so literal, solar days “are copies and shadows of the days distinguished by God in the Genesis creation record.”⁶² Few, if any, surely, would find this argument convincing.

In response to the idea of “God’s time,” Henry Morris holds that “If man’s ‘days’ are not the same as God’s ‘days,’ then language becomes meaningless,” and the use of “day” when something else was intended would involve God in using an “inept pun.” Hasel points out that “Genesis 1 is not interested in depicting how God reckons time.”⁶³

⁵⁷ TWOT, 1:380; H.C. Leupold in *The Biblical Expositor*, Carl F.H. Henry, ed. (Philadelphia: Holmes, 1960), 1:56; Wenham, 55.

⁵⁸ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979), 410; NIDOTTE, 2:459; *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 6:79.

⁵⁹ HALOT, 4:1700.

⁶⁰ Bruce R. Waltke, “Creation and Chaos” (Unpublished), 32. Lectures delivered at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974.

⁶¹ Dick Fischer, “The Days of Creation: Hours or Eons?” *PSCF* 42:1 (March, 1990), 16–17.

⁶² Ross, *Creation and Time*, 60.

⁶³ Morris, In Radmacher and Preus, 340; Hasel, 12.

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It may be pointed out also that the nonliteralist position flies in the face of the testimony of lexicographers, referred to above, that the days of Gen 1 were intended to be seen as literal days.

The Day-Age View

Because many who accept the nonliteral position maintain that the days of creation were, in reality, eons, it is necessary to discuss the Day-Age Theory here.⁶⁴ The question may be raised: If all arguments for the literalist position were to fail, would accepting the Day-Age Theory be justified?

Actually, this theory faces difficulties—hermeneutical, logical, and scientific. Several of these are discussed here:

1. Hermeneutical Problem. Some expositors, including John Skinner, have criticized this theory on hermeneutical grounds. Interpreting *yôm* as eon, Skinner maintains, “is opposed to the plain sense of the passage, and has no warrant in Heb [*sic*] usage (not even in Ps. 90:4).” “If the writer had had aeons in his mind,” Skinner held, “he would hardly have missed the opportunity of stating how many millenniums each embraced.”⁶⁵

2. Logical Difficulty. The Day-Age Theory requires extrapolations of impermissible magnitude. Obviously, even if the days of Gen 1 were not literal days, it would not follow that they were periods of time long enough to satisfy the requirements of evolutionists. It clearly will not do, for example, to imagine, with Blocher, that if day seven is thousands of years long, the other six can cover “millions of centuries of cosmogony.”⁶⁶ Obviously, periods of a thousand years each (according to the nonliteral argument from 2 Pet 3:8), without huge expansion, would be inadequate for biological evolution as commonly understood. It cannot be asserted too frequently nor emphasized too strongly that even if arguments for nonliteral days are valid, none of them, without impermissible expansion, would yield sufficient time for the purpose of harmonizing Gen 1 with science.

3. Time Required for Divine Actions. It may be stated that God takes no more time for any operation than His purpose in that action requires. That He can create by fiat and *ex nihilo* suggests that He can create instantaneously. The belief that creation required eons seems to represent a compromised view of the transcendence of God. As Allis notes, “limitless time is a poor substitute for that

⁶⁴ J. J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1975), 53. For a further discussion of the Day-Age view, with critical responses, see Ross and Archer, et al., in Hagopian, 123–214; see also Morris, *Biblical Basis*, 117–21.

⁶⁵ John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis (ICC)*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), 21.

⁶⁶ Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning*, David G. Preston, trans. (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1984), 44.

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Omnipotence which can dispense with time.”⁶⁷ And Dillmann argues (1) that short periods of time suffice for divine causality and “are alone suitable” and (2) that Moses, in order to provide a rationale for the Sabbath, “embraced the process of creation in the framework of seven *days*.” Otherwise Moses would have allowed less time, but not more, for creation.⁶⁸ Those who believe that God could have created the world in a few days or in an instant but chose to use eons to do so should by all means come forward with a convincing rationale for their position. Hugh Ross suggests such a rationale, but the writer regards it as unconvincing.⁶⁹

4. Scientific Problem. Unless Day-Age theorists are willing to relinquish belief in the sequence of events of Gen 1, their theory involves problems, for this sequence does not match the accepted evolutionary sequence. For example, according to the latter, birds and whales (created on day five), evolved, respectively, from dinosaurs and land mammals (created on day six).

Morris, indeed, listed more than twenty “contradictions” between the sequence of Gen 1 and the accepted evolutionary sequence.⁷⁰

We may agree, then, with statements by Dillmann and Weeks that (1) the reasons given for construing the days as eons are inadequate; and (2) the “whole context” of Gen 1 is against the idea of interpreting the days as ages.⁷¹

The Days-of-Revelation Theory

Some scholars have proposed that the six days were indeed literal days but that the periods of creative work were eons. One of these views is considered here.⁷²

This theory holds that the six days were not days of creation, but days when God revealed to human beings, one day at a time, the work of creation. Wiseman, a leading proponent of this theory, maintains that much of creation “had been accomplished in the long ages past,” and that “*There is no suggestion that the acts or processes of God had occupied those six days.*”⁷³

Wiseman builds much of his case on the use of the Heb verb *‘āśā* in Exod 20:9–11, where, in the KJV, it is translated “do” in vv. 9 and 10, “made” in v. 11. In about two-thirds of its OT occurrences *‘āśā* is translated “do” or “make” in the KJV. Wiseman maintains that since it is occasionally translated “show” in the KJV, it can be so translated in Exod 20:11. His idea is that in six days, God

⁶⁷ Oswald T. Allis, *God Spoke by Moses* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1951), 11. See also *The Interpreter’s Bible*, George Arthur Buttrick, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1952), 1:471.

⁶⁸ Dillmann, 1:64–65.

⁶⁹ Ross, *Creation and Time*, 141–42.

⁷⁰ Morris, *Biblical Basis*, 119–120.

⁷¹ Dillmann, 1:64; Noel Weeks, *The Sufficiency of Scripture* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1988), 117.

⁷² For discussions, pro and con, of other views, see Pipa and Hall, and Jordan.

⁷³ Wiseman, *Creation Revealed*, 124; *Clues to Creation* (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1977), 137.

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“showed,” or revealed, to human beings the work of creation. He maintains that in v. 11, *‘āśâ* “necessarily means no such thing” as “created.”⁷⁴ According to Hasel, however, there is no Hebrew-English dictionary that supports “show” as a translation of *‘āśâ*.⁷⁵ The word is translated “show” (shew) 43 times—but never “reveal”—in the KJV. In most cases the reference is to the manifestation of a positive emotional quality, but in no case to the revelation of truth or communication of knowledge.

Regarding the use of *‘āśâ* in Exod 20:9, 11, it appears (1) that neither its semantic range nor the context justifies the translation “showed” or “revealed” (“show” certainly does not do in v. 9); (2) that *‘āśâ* can be, and should be, translated “made” or “created” in v. 11.⁷⁶

Exodus 20:8–11 cannot be used, then, to support the Days-of-Revelation Theory. For this reason and others, this theory should be considered invalid.

Perspectives advanced by Hayward, Newman and Eckelmann, Bradley and Olsen, and Sailhamer cannot be considered here.⁷⁷ None of these schemas appears to have attracted many followers.

Non-chronological Views

Some scholars have maintained that Gen 1 should be understood non-chronologically—that the author of Gen 1 was dedicated to a high-level purpose, such as formulating a theology of the Sabbath, and was not interested in details of chronology. Clouser, indeed, goes so far as to consider it improper to question whether the six days were either literal twenty-four-hour days or geological eras. Surprisingly, he states that “the text shows not the slightest hint of any concern” with either the processes used by God or the time involved.⁷⁸ In other words, the question of literal vs. nonliteral days is not an issue. This concept is here discussed, first in general terms, and second, with reference to a specific formulation of it—the Framework Hypothesis.

In General. The purposes of Moses in writing Gen 1 were surely high-level purposes, and *may* have included, in addition to narrating the creation story: (1) providing a theology of (a) creation, (b) the Sabbath,⁷⁹ and (c) humanity, and (2) combating idolatry and mythological cosmogonies.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Wiseman, *Creation Revealed*, 32–34.

⁷⁵ Hasel, “Days of Creation,” 14. HALOT (revised ed. of 1995), NIDOTTE, and TLOT support Hasel here.

⁷⁶ TLOT, 2:949, supports this conclusion.

⁷⁷ Alan Hayward, *Creation and Evolution* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1995), 170–71; Newman and Eckelmann, 83–86; Bradley and Olsen, in Radmacher and Preus, 288–90, 299–301. John A. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1996) presents a radically different view—see especially 14, 41–44. For a critical appraisal of Sailhamer’s schema, see Jordan, 131–169.

⁷⁸ Roy A. Clouser, “Genesis on the Origin of the Human Race,” *PSCF* 43:1 (March 1991), 6.

⁷⁹ Blocher, 50.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Hasel. “The Polemical Nature of the Genesis Cosmology.” *Evangelical Quarterly* 46:2 (April–June, 1974), 81–102.

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In response, we should note the following: (1) that an interest in details would be a necessary part of the realization of the writer's purpose; (2) providing an account of creation would certainly involve a concern for chronological details. That creation was distributed over six literal days with cessation from work on the seventh is obviously a component of a theology of the Sabbath. It may also be said (3) that the idea that Moses would not be interested in details is gratuitous; and (4) that the notion of reading purposes into the mind of an author and then drawing expository inferences from the assumed purpose seems to me exegetically unsafe.

Against proponents of a non-chronological arrangement of Gen 1, Pipa presents four arguments for a chronological approach: "First, a genre and literary analysis suggests sequential narrative." "Second, the text has the grammatical mark of sequential narrative," namely, the repeated use of the waw-consecutive feature. Pipa reports that Moses uses this Hebrew construction fifty-five times in Gen 1. "Third, the use of 'day' with the ordinal number demands a sequential reading." Pipa holds that there is not one example in the OT of *yôm* with an ordinal number used "non-sequentially." Fourth, Biblical usage elsewhere, as in Psalm 104, parallels the creation account.⁸¹

Young also opposes the idea of a non-chronological arrangement of Gen 1. He asserts "that everything in the text militates against" "a non-chronological view of the days."⁸²

The Framework Hypothesis. The Framework Hypothesis is clearly defined by Meredith Kline: Moses uses "the anthropomorphic figure of a week" as a frame on which to arrange the creation story and as a framework for a theology of the Sabbath. With this purpose in mind, adherents of the hypothesis maintain, Moses is not interested in details of chronology or in the processes of creation.

According to Mark Ross, this hypothesis "argues, *on exegetical grounds*, that the organizing principle of the creation account is topical rather than chronological. It denies, *on exegetical grounds*, that the seven-day week is intended as a chronological unfolding of the separate acts of creation limited in duration to one calendar week."⁸³

As noted above, Dillmann holds that Moses "embraced the process of creation in the framework of seven *days*," in order to provide a rationale for the Sabbath.⁸⁴ S. R. Driver holds much the same view.⁸⁵ Kline appears to be the most persistent defender of this hypothesis. It is his version of this hypothesis that is

⁸¹ Pipa, in Pipa and Hall, 182–186.

⁸² Young, 100.

⁸³ Mark Ross, in Pipa and Hall, 114.

⁸⁴ Dillmann, 1:64–65.

⁸⁵ S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (Westminster Commentary), (London: Methuen, 1943),

considered here.⁸⁶ Because of limitations of space, only selected aspects can be discussed.

For the writer's purposes, the main supports for Kline's Framework Hypothesis are (1) his version of the concept of God's time vs. human time; (2) his interpretation of Gen 2:5-7; (3) alleged difficulties with a sequential understanding of Gen 1. (The second and third of these overlap.)

1. Kline's Concept of God's Time and Man's Time. In his concept of "Upper-Register Time and Lower-Register Time," Kline has provided a more sophisticated version of the concept of "God's time and man's time." From the mention of a space bifurcated, according to Gen 1:1, into a "higher" heavens and a "lower" earth, Kline posits the existence of a "higher-register" ("heavenly") time and a "lower-register" ("earthly") time. He holds that "The six evening-morning days" marked by divine fiats were "upper register" days "not identifiable in terms of solar days" and "relate to the history of creation at the upper register of the cosmos."⁸⁷

It does not appear to the writer that Kline's inference from the idea of a bifurcated space to that of a bifurcated time is valid. He agrees with Jordan's statement that Kline has not shown that there is any such thing as an upper register time or that upper-register time would differ from lower-register time.⁸⁸

2. Kline's Interpretation of Gen 2:5. The phrase "exegetical grounds" used above refers to Kline's interpretation of Gen 2:5, 6. According to Kline, the "scenario conjured" by the literal interpretation of Gen 1 is at odds with 2:5; involves a conflict between science and Scripture; and pits Scripture against Scripture.⁸⁹ In reality the literal interpretation is at odds with Kline's interpretation of 2:5, or vice versa. Duncan and Hall characterize Kline's understanding of Gen 2:5, 6 as a "*sine qua non*" of the Framework interpretation. If he is wrong on this count, they maintain, "the whole theory falls."⁹⁰

From the statement in 2:5 that there was no shrub of the field because there had been no rain, Kline infers that the *modus operandi* of preserving what God had created was normal, non-miraculous providence. Genesis 2:5 refers, then, not to creation, but to subsequent history, to the preservation of what God has brought into existence.⁹¹ He recognizes that "Acts of supernatural origination did initiate and punctuate the creation process."

For Kline, two problems arise with relation to 2:5:

⁸⁶ Kline's views may be found in two articles: "Because It Had Not Rained." *Westminster Theological Journal* 20/2 (May, 1958), 146-157; and "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony," with Lee Irons as co-author and with critical responses, in Hagopian, 217-303.

⁸⁷ Kline, "Space and Time," 10.

⁸⁸ Jordan, 67.

⁸⁹ Kline, "Space and Time," 14, 13.

⁹⁰ Duncan and Hall, in Hagopian, 263.

⁹¹ Kline, "Space and Time," 11, 12.

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a. He maintains, with reference to day 3 of creation week, that land that had recently emerged from beneath the sea could not have become dry land covered with vegetation in one day by the normal process of evaporation and growth. He states that according to “the principle revealed in Genesis 2:5 the process of evaporation at that time was the ordinary one.”⁹²

Kline seems to have overlooked the possibility that dry land appeared as the result of geological activity as well as evaporation. The intended contrast in the account of day three, further, is not between dry soil and wet soil but between continents and seas. And he seems to forget his own statement that Gen 2:5 relates not to creation, but to preservation. The work of day 3, however, was clearly a work of creation.

This idea of geological work on day three is supported by Whitcomb and Morris: “Especially on the third day there was a tremendous amount of geological work, including orogeny,” and “erosion and redeposition of surface materials.”⁹³

b. Kline alleges a contradiction between Gen 2:5 and the literalist interpretation of Gen 1. According to 2:5, there was no vegetation because there had been no rain. According to Gen 1, the earth was covered with vegetation at the end of day three. Kline “discovered” this contradiction—a contradiction that cannot be resolved if the days are literal days—by identifying the “shrub of the field” and “the plant of the field,” which, according to 2:5 were not yet in existence, with the vegetation in general of 1:11, 12. Kline is quite explicit: “Absent then were all plants, whether belonging to the uncultivated wilderness or to cultivated areas.”⁹⁴

Kline concludes that the contradiction between the literalist interpretation of Gen 1 and his interpretation of 2:5–7 means that the creative events are not represented as chronologically arranged. If his interpretation of 2:5 were correct, 2:5 would reflect a situation “that has obviously lasted for a while; it assumes a far more leisurely pace on the part of the Creator” and would suggest that the work of creation could not have been accomplished in a few days.⁹⁵ Kline apparently believes that creation occupied “aeons.”⁹⁶

In response to Kline’s argument from 2:5, 6, it should be pointed out that other interpretations of Gen 2:5, 6 have emerged.⁹⁷ The writer accepts, and fol-

⁹² Kline, “Had Not Rained,” 151.

⁹³ John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), 214, 215.

⁹⁴ Kline, “Space and Time,” 12.

⁹⁵ Kline, “Space and Time,” 13.

⁹⁶ Kline, “Had Not Rained,” 152, 154; “Space and Time,” 14, 13, 12.

⁹⁷ For other interpretations of Gen 2:5, 6 see Young, 58–65, and Jacques B. Doukhan, “The Literary Structure of the Genesis Creation Story,” ThD Dissertation, Andrews University, 1978).

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lows here, that of Cassuto followed by Younker, and with additions by Jordan⁹⁸ and himself:

(1) Gen 2:5, 6 posits a situation that was not part of God's plan for human beings, but which, as Jordan suggests, was reserved for remedial judgment upon them should they sin. The shrub of the field and plant of the field and tilling the soil came in as results of their sin (Gen 3:17–19). Before they sinned the work of Adam and Eve was to tend the orchard of Eden, not to cultivate field crops. Rain came later.

(2) The shrub of the field and plant of the field of 2:5 correspond not to vegetation in general, but, respectively, to (a) the thorns and thistles of 3:18, desert plants that, on rare occasions of rain, spring up from seeds preserved in the dry soil; (b) the plants of the field of 3:18, grain-bearing plants that require cultivation.

(3) Rain had not fallen, and would not fall for some time, because the conditions required to produce it, especially the presence in the atmosphere of particles required as condensation nuclei for the formation of raindrops,⁹⁹ were not all present. Because the earth was watered by a "mist," rain was unnecessary.¹⁰⁰

This interpretation, if valid, removes the basis for belief in a contradiction between 2:5, 6 and a literal interpretation of Gen 1. I agree with Jordan's statement that Meredith Kline's argument from 2:5 is "without merit."¹⁰¹

3. Kline's Allegations of Problems of Sequence. In arguing for the Framework Hypothesis, Kline seeks to show that impossible sequences are involved in the traditional positions on Gen 1. This section may be introduced with Kline's statement: "In short, if the narrative sequence were intended to represent the chronological sequence, Genesis 1 would bristle with contradictions of what is revealed in Gen. 2:5."¹⁰² Obviously, these "contradictory sequences" must be true of both the literal and the Day-Age positions if they can be relied on to support the non-chronological Framework Hypothesis. Three of these sequences are considered here:

1. Kline points out that vegetation, created on day three, would not have survived without the sun, created on day four. Since most vegetation survives daily periods of darkness, Kline's criticism would apply only to the Day-Age Theory.

2. Kline points out, against the Day-Age Theory, that if the earth were in place on day-age one, and the stars were created on day-age four, "All the vast

⁹⁸ Cassuto, 1:100–104; Randall W. Younker, *God's Creation* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1999), 50–58; Jordan, 54. Kline either was unaware of Cassuto's interpretation or chose to ignore it.

⁹⁹ See R. G. Barry and R. J. Chorley, *Atmosphere, Weather, and Climate*, 6th ed. (London: Routledge, 1992), 70.

¹⁰⁰ The Hebrew word for "mist" is of uncertain meaning. In the absence of rain, there may have been a heavy dew.

¹⁰¹ Jordan, 55.

¹⁰² Kline, "Space and Time," 14.

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universe whose origin is narrated on day 4 would then be younger (even billions of years younger) than planet earth.¹⁰³

In reply to this argument, the writer suggests that because of the ambiguity of the Heb morpheme *'et* in the phrase “and the stars also” in Gen 1:16, this passage should probably be regarded as noncommittal regarding the time of the creation of the stars.¹⁰⁴ As a consequence of this ambiguity, the latter part of 1:16 can be translated “the lesser light, with the stars, to rule the night.” This translation, adopted by Spurrell, Moffatt, and as a possibility by House,¹⁰⁵ (and with support from Ps 136:8, 9), “removes the anomaly of the stars being created on the fourth day.”¹⁰⁶ Kline can hardly use this passage to support his hypothesis against the literalist position or the Day-Age Theory.

3. Kline points out also that plants that depend on symbiotic relationships with animals would not have been able to survive if created long before animals. Because these relationships were not necessarily in place at creation, this argument cannot be used to negate the literal position. These relationships may have arisen long after animals were created.

Whatever effect these allegations of contradiction may be held to have on the validity of the Day-Age Theory, they leave the literal view virtually untouched and cannot be used, therefore, to validate the Framework Hypothesis against the literal view.

The Framework Hypothesis has not escaped heavy criticism. Jordan holds that it appears to be “devoid of any sound foundation” and that it has been “thoroughly refuted over and over again,” but has more adherents than ever. Young asks if “serious exegesis of Genesis 1 would in itself lead anyone to adopt” it and says that “everything in the text militates against it.” Pipa holds that the hypothesis “does not work.”¹⁰⁷

In view of the preceding analysis and these criticisms, the writer regards the Framework Hypothesis as untenable.

Conclusions

Citations from several who have studied the literal-day issue serve, with a comment by the writer, as conclusions:

¹⁰³ Kline, “Space and Time,” 13.

¹⁰⁴ For a discussion of this ambiguity, without reference to Gen 1:16, see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 177. Colin L House, “Some Notes On Translating *וְאֵת הַכּוֹכָבִים* in Genesis 1:16.” *AUSS* 25:3 (Autumn, 1987), 241–248, discusses this ambiguity with explicit reference to Gen 1:16.

¹⁰⁵ George J. Spurrell, *Notes on the Text of the Book of Genesis* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1896), 12; and James Moffatt, *The Bible* (New York: Harper's, 1954); House, 244.

¹⁰⁶ House, 248.

¹⁰⁷ Young, 100; Jordan, 69, 82; Pipa, in Pipa and Hall, 173. For further discussion of the Framework Hypothesis see, in addition to Kline, the following: Ross (in Pipa and Hall, 113–130) argues for the hypothesis; Pipa, (in Pipa and Hall, 154–179); Young (44–76); Jordan (51–69) and Duncan, Hall, H. Ross, and Archer in Hagopian (257–277) argue against it.

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Hasel, after considering “key” nonliteralist arguments, concludes that on the basis of genre investigation, literary considerations, grammar and syntax, and semantic connections, these arguments are wanting. “The cumulative evidence,” he says, “converges on every level, leading to the singular conclusion that the designation *yôm*, ‘day,’ in Genesis 1 means consistently a literal 24-hour day.” He adds, “The author of Genesis could not have produced more comprehensive and all-inclusive ways to express the idea of a literal ‘day’ than the ones that were chosen.”¹⁰⁸

Duncan and Hall maintain that “compelling exegetical evidence for reading the creation days as anything other than normal days is lacking.” They affirm also that “All these purely exegetical considerations [which they discuss] taken together compel the 24-hour [day] interpretation.”¹⁰⁹

Last, according to Stambaugh, “The only reasonable choice which remains is that Moses meant to communicate that God created in a series of six consecutive twenty-four hour days.” “God, through the ‘pen’ of Moses, . . . is going out of His way to tell us that the ‘days’ of creation were literal solar days.” Stambaugh concludes by saying that **“the only meaning which is possible is that the ‘days’ of creation were 24-hour days.”**¹¹⁰

The writer is persuaded (1) that the work of creation was distributed over six consecutive literal days and that Moses so represented it; (2) that attempts to get nonliteral “days” out of the days of Gen 1 have failed and are exegetically unsound; (3) that interpreting these days as nonliteral involves questionable procedures; and (4) that interpreting these days as eons in order to harmonize Gen 1 and science (a) involves major extrapolation and (b) represents a compromised view of the transcendence of God and an unnecessary concession to the naturalistic bias of contemporary scientism.

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¹⁰⁸ Hasel, “Days of Creation,” 30, 31.

¹⁰⁹ Duncan and Hall, in Hagopian, 23, 98.

¹¹⁰ Stambaugh, 75, 77.