

# The Days of Genesis

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<http://lordibelieve.org/Days.doc>

Often I am asked, “As a Christian apologist <sup>1</sup> open to an old earth view of creation, how do you understand the days of Genesis 1?” Usually this flows from a discussion of the age of earth: is it young or old? <sup>2</sup> Inquirers often note that the evening-morning language of Genesis 1 is the same concept of a day as we commonly understand when marking off days on our calendars. This calendar day feature of Genesis 1 is usually associated with a young earth view of creation (six ordinary, consecutive, twenty-four hour periods, or 144 hours total).

I fully agree that the usage of the word “day” (Hebrew: *yom*) in the repetitive Genesis 1 formula most probably means a calendar day. <sup>3</sup> The “day” formula is, “And there was evening, and there was morning, day one”, “... a second day”, “... a third day”, “... the sixth day.” While *yom* can literally mean a time longer than a calendar day <sup>4</sup>, as it does in Genesis 2:4, that does not seem to me to be the usage in Genesis 1. Furthermore, Genesis 1 serves as a prologue for the historical narratives of the Torah explaining to the fledgling Israelites how it was that they were standing at Mount Sinai making a covenant with this Jehovah God who was speaking from the mountain before them. Thus, Genesis 1 is presented as the beginning of an actual history, not as theological mythology. However, it is also readily apparent from the natural revelation contained in creation that the events described in Genesis 1 unfolded over many millennia. <sup>5</sup> Therefore, I ask myself how can I be true to the theological and historical genre of the text, true to the “day-ness” of the text, and true to God’s natural revelation which stands witness of His divine nature? (Romans 1:19-20) Some recent-creation proponents contend such a harmony is not only not possible, but actually a compromise with the false doctrine of evolution. In such minds, long ages and evolution are one and the same. They suggest the only way to resolve the matter is to discount the natural revelation’s indications of antiquity. <sup>6</sup> I believe there must be a better way than to discount

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<sup>1</sup> Christian Apologetics: The defense of Christianity, as per 1 Peter 3:15 “Be ready to **make a defense** of your hope, to anyone that asks.” See my article about two approaches to apologetics,” [LordiBelieve.org/apologetics.pdf](http://LordiBelieve.org/apologetics.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> For an independent perspective on this debate see John Holzman’s article “**Young- and Old-Earth Creationists: Can we even talk together?**” [www.sonlight.com/young\\_or\\_old\\_earth.html](http://www.sonlight.com/young_or_old_earth.html)

<sup>3</sup> Another interpretation that takes “yom” as a calendar day is the “**Framework**” view. This view sees the days as literal back-to-back days of a creation week. However, it sees the whole week as being figuratively representative of the much longer creation process, but expressed in the figure or framework of a “creation week.” Henri Blocher presents a good case for this view in his book, “*In the Beginning: The opening chapters of Genesis*” IVP, 1985.

<sup>4</sup> This is often called the “**Day-Age**” view, most forcefully championed by Hugh Ross via his Reasons To Believe ministry and website [www.Reasons.org](http://www.Reasons.org). This view sees the days of Genesis 1 as being of great duration. The word “yom” is understood as a longer period of time, as it means in Genesis 2.4 where one day is used to mean the whole of the six days of chapter one. Sometimes this view is also called “**Progressive Creation.**”

<sup>5</sup> See my online book, “*Evidences That Have Led Many Scientists to Accept An Ancient Date for Creation of the Earth and Universe*”, [LordiBelieve.org/Page15.html](http://LordiBelieve.org/Page15.html)

<sup>6</sup> Three mutually exclusive approaches are used by recent creation proponents to discount the evidence of age.

1) “The physical evidence is misinterpreted by mainstream science. True science (young earth science) finds evidence of youth rather than antiquity in the physical data.” Usually  **flood geology** goes with this approach. ([LordiBelieve.org/floodgeology.doc](http://LordiBelieve.org/floodgeology.doc))

2) “Operational science cannot speak regarding origins, since creation was a one-time, non-repeatable event.”

3) “The physical evidence of antiquity gives an **appearance of age** ([lordibelieve.org/time/AppearanceAge.pps](http://lordibelieve.org/time/AppearanceAge.pps)) but it is only an appearance given by creation of a mature, fully functioning earth. Just as Adam was created as a

something God seems to have put so much effort into making apparent to us through His creation. On the other hand, the skeptic prefers to discount the Bible in favor of naturalistic philosophies. I can't accept that either. The Bible has too much evidence in favor of its divine authorship to dismiss it without seeking a better solution than either of these extremes.

A very plausible solution to the dilemma is an interpretive view sometimes known as the *Fiat Days* interpretation. In this view, the days of Genesis are the divine "calendar" days during which God made the creative pronouncements of His will, not how long it takes for those pronouncements to be finalized. (This *Fiat Days* view should not be confused with Bernard Ramm's *revelatory days* interpretation, in which Ramm took the days to be six days over which God revealed Genesis 1 to Moses on Mount Sinai. <sup>7</sup>)

I currently find the *Fiat Days* idea to be the best interpretive approach I know to integrate special and general revelation regarding creation. By experience I know that it has strong apologetic potential for addressing skeptics' questions about the Biblical creation account. Another strong commendation for the approach is that it places primary emphasis on **creation by God's word**, just as we find in Hebrews 11:3. "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which were visible." The psalmist expresses this fiat emphasis in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and by the breath of His mouth all their hosts." (33:6) "For He spoke and it was done, He commanded, and it stood fast." (33:9) Such emphasis on divine fiat stands in stark contrast to modern doctrines and creeds focusing primary significance on how *quickly* God created; <sup>8</sup> which is a temporal argument never made in scripture regarding the veracity of creation. I've recommended the fiat days view for several years as an approach at least worth one's further study, even if not the ultimate solution. For additional discussions see Allan Hayward's "Creation and Evolution" (Bethany, 1985) and Robert Newman in "Three Views of Creation" (Zondervan, 1999, J.P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds editors).

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mature adult having an appearance of age, so was the whole of creation." This approach sees no conflict with God being a one who cannot lie, which is a problem critics of appearance of age have.

These three recent-creation methods of rejecting physical age evidences are often presented in a highly commingled amalgam, though logically they are mutually exclusive.

<sup>7</sup> "We believe . . . that creation was *revealed* in six days, not performed in six days. We believe that the six days are *pictorial-revelatory* days, not literal days nor age-days. The days are means of communicating to man the great fact that *God is Creator*, and that *He is Creator of all*" (Bernard Ramm, *A Christian View Of Science And Scripture*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1954, p. 151). Italics his.

<sup>8</sup> For example, follows are statements taken from the *Apologetics Press*' statement of creedal beliefs taken from their website in 1996. *Apologetics Press* is headed by Bert Thompson and Wayne Jackson of Montgomery Alabama.

- The entire material Universe was specially-created by this Almighty God in 6 days of approximately 24-hours each, as revealed in Genesis 1 and Exodus 20:11.
- Both biblical and scientific evidence indicate a relatively young Earth, in contrast to evolutionary views of a multi-billion-year age for the Earth.
- Both biblical and scientific evidence indicate that many of the Earth's features must be viewed in light of a universal, catastrophic flood (to wit: the Noachian deluge as expressed in Genesis 6-8).
- All compromising theories such as theistic evolution, progressive creationism, threshold evolution, the gap theory, the modified gap theory, the day age theory, the non-worldview, etc., shall be denied and opposed as patently false.

This is not a “new” view or an interpretive innovation of post-modernists. Indeed, it has scholarly roots that extend to before the nineteenth century era of modernism and twentieth century naturalism. One of the notable nineteenth proponents is Hugh Capron<sup>9</sup> who details and defends all the essential aspects of the Fiat Days view in his 1902 book, *The Conflict of Truth*. For an excellent current review of Capron’s book regarding his Fiat Days thesis see the 1985 Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute research report #27, by Dallas Cain.<sup>10</sup> Cain also provides a historical review of the early proponents of the Fiat Days view showing that it is an approach resting on sound principles of Biblical interpretation and Hebrew scholarship.

In the Fiat Days view of Genesis 1, the days refer to when God made the particular **pronouncements** of His will: they are the “**And God said’s**,” they are the **Fiats**. For example, Day One is the day wherein God said, “Let there be light.” The rest of the verse is essentially inspired commentary by Moses as he parenthetically<sup>11</sup> notes that what God said indeed happened just as God had said it. Then the next day of God’s pronouncements is introduced by ending that section with the “evening, morning, day” formula. (See the Appendix to this article for the Genesis 1 text presented word-for-word from this view.) The next “day” is the next day of God’s pronouncements, but not necessarily the next “24 hour period” immediately following said pronouncements.<sup>12</sup> In between the pronouncement days, the creation *responds* to God’s decree, as God’s will is implemented. From his hindsight perspective in time, Moses notes the *fait accompli* with the expression “it was so” and notes God’s approval of the progress by “it was good.” Thus the pace of creation’s response proceeds in accord with the physical processes created solely by God’s word: processes that as He designed them in general take a longer time than a few hours.

Almost *no process* for implementing God’s will is revealed in Genesis 1. In Genesis 2 we do get some insight into a few process details used by God to form Adam and Eve’s bodies, but even that level of detail is missing in Genesis 1. Furthermore, as chapter two introduces some of the details, it also introduces a sense of a long time passing. Consider for example:

No shrub or plant had yet sprouted *because* of no rain yet and no man yet to cultivate. (2:5)  
Adam’s mission to cultivate and *keep* the garden (2:15), including ...  
Adam names all the animals (The world’s greatest safari – millions of species!) (2:19)  
Adam is *deeply* lonely to the point of despair (2:20)  
Adam’s exclamation “This is now (or, “At last!”) bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.” (2:23)

*All this in just a few hours?!?! Sorry ladies, but we men just don’t get that lonely in a few hours, especially not while on the hunting trip of a lifetime! As recent creation advocates are fond of saying, “It’s just not the plain, simple, sense of the text.” The more insight the inspired text gives of the*

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<sup>9</sup> Author of *The Conflict of Truth, The Anatomy of Truth, The Anatomy of Science, The Antiquity of Man, and The Highway to Heaven and the Byway to Nowhere*. He was a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, the Royal Geological Society and the Linnean Society. *The Conflict of Truth* is addressed to Herbert Spencer and to the Nebular Hypothesis; 500 pages and 29 chapters. Chapters 11 and 12 present his Fiat Days thesis.

<sup>10</sup> Dallas E. Cain, *Creation and Carpon’s Explanatory Interpretation, c. 1902, A Literature Search*, IBRI Research Report #27 (1985), <http://www.ibri.org/27creation.html> , mirrored at [www.LordiBelieve.org/genesis/capron.html](http://www.LordiBelieve.org/genesis/capron.html)

<sup>11</sup> Allan Hayward has a very nice presentation on this parenthetical approach to Fiat Days in his book *Creation and Evolution*. For an adapted version of his approach see Appendix, or, <http://lordibelieve.org/TheDay.doc>

<sup>12</sup> However, nonconsecutive days is not a necessary corollary of the Fiat Days view. Indeed, the days could as well be consecutive, with the accomplishments following after all the pronouncements have been completed. Such seems to have been Capron’s view, although this author sees nonconsecutive days as more naturally according with the general revelation, though it is a point which should be easily accommodated either way.

events on day six, the more sense we have of much larger amounts of time than a few hours passing in association with those events. It reads like a *long-term* situation. This is the primary evidence that all is not as it seems from the initial “simple” reading of chapter one.

Notice that chapter one gives no such insights into any process for creation other than, “God said.” If chapter one provided the only information we had about the creation of man and woman, we might naively assume that they instantaneously appeared as soon as God issued His creative fiat, just as some assume for all the other divine fiats in Genesis 1. But we would be in serious error about an instantaneous, no process, creation of Adam and Eve. (Chapter two reveals that God shaped Adam from dust and formed Eve from a rib taken from Adam while asleep.) Similarly, we are very likely to be in error if we assume an instantaneous popping into existence concerning the rest of the pronouncements of Genesis 1. That process details are missing from Genesis 1 does not mean no process applies. The example of Adam and Eve proves that. Genesis 1 simply doesn’t tell us anything about such processes. Apparently, that was not the purpose of Genesis 1. It only tells us primary cause and ultimate effect. The primary cause is “God said.” The certain effect is that creation happened – solely because *God* said so.

If *God* speaks, it happens. That is the overarching faith-building message of the entire Old Testament history. And that message begins with Genesis 1. It would be the message of all the prophets: if *God* pronounces a king or nation’s ruin, it happens. Whatever *God* says, one *must* obey – just as creation did. The Bible presents God as the God of history pronouncing and executing His will upon all of His creation. The creation is a direct result of *God’s* word. That is the essential message of Genesis 1. That message directly related to the escaping Hebrews. They needed to understand who the real God was. They needed a basis for faith in God. They had been living in pagan Egypt for many generations. They brought out Egypt’s idols in their satchels and Egypt’s culture in their hearts. When life became hard in the dessert, they longed for their Egyptian culture. When they were afraid, they made an idol calf to worship the missing Jehovah. These were a people who had been led out of Egypt, but Egypt was still firmly in these people. Moses’ God was an “unknown god” to them. Genesis 1 explains in no uncertain terms that it was this GOD, not their Egyptian gods, who is Creator. Note that everything named in Genesis 1 was something that Egyptians, and most probably the Hebrews, worshipped as gods: heavens and earth, waters, light, day, night, plants, sky, sun, moon, stars, fish, birds, beasts, and even man as Pharaoh. But Genesis 1 explains that all of those things were themselves nothing but the creation of THE GOD. He who merely speaks and it happens. Cause-Effect. He was the same God who had chosen the Hebrews in keeping with His promises made to Abraham hundreds of years earlier.

With the Hebrews quaking at the foot of smoking Mount Sinai, God commences to give them the law they would live by in covenant with Him. As Creator of everything, as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all their forebears,<sup>13</sup> as the God who freed them from Egyptian bondage, as the God who fought and won their battles, He had proven He had all authority to establish His covenant with them. The same history proved His love as a God of compassion for the faithful who trusted in Him. He chastened them as their Father. He had rescued them from their burdens; He gave them

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<sup>13</sup> Genealogies play a major role in the OT history. The Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 are used as the primary basis for recent creation claims. See my article on *Genealogies* at [lordibelieve.org/Genealogy.doc](http://lordibelieve.org/Genealogy.doc). Also see W.H.Green’s 1890 article “*Primeval Chronology*” which showed the fallacies in Usher’s original creation chronology based on biblical genealogies. Available at [lordibelieve.org/time/WHGreen.PDF](http://lordibelieve.org/time/WHGreen.PDF)

manna from heaven, water from the dessert, protected them from their enemies, guided them day and night, made them a nation, and gave them a new land with blessings running over. He was a faithful and compassionate God, slow to anger, executing His holy wrath only in His longsuffering.

The law He gives them at Mount Sinai is directly connected with the history lesson that began in Genesis 1. In Deuteronomy 4:15-19 Moses *explicitly* makes this connection between the law, against idolatry, and the elements of creation in Genesis 1. The Deuteronomy passage essential lists the created elements of Genesis 1 in reverse order, including images of men, animals, birds, creeping things, fish, and the heavenly bodies. What was the first commandment given to the Hebrews? “You shall have no other gods before Me.” Not all your Egyptian gods or the gods of the Canaanites. I am the creator of all. And the second commandment? “You shall make no idols.” Not like all the images you worshipped in Egypt or will admire in Canaan. Indeed look at yourselves. You *are* made in God’s image, so make no idols. And the third? “You shall respect *my* name.” Not the Pharaoh of Egypt or the Baals of Canaan. *I* brought you, Pharaoh, and all creation into being, and *I* will take you out if needed. **All of the history lesson beginning with creation in Genesis 1 is leading up to this covenant God makes with these people at Mount Sinai**, as recorded in Exodus 19-20 and extending through Deuteronomy. Genesis 1 is the beginning of the revelation of that covenant. Hence, it is no mystery that to ensure the Israelites remembered who God is, He commands them in the fourth commandment to remember the lesson of creation by observing the Sabbath as a holy day of rest, just as Holy God rested from His work as Creator on the seventh day.<sup>14</sup> He was not one of the gods they had known as slaves in Egypt. He was a God who offered them *rest* from their labors in a promised land. He is One God. He is Holy God, The Creator. As He explained to Moses before going to confront Pharaoh, He is the “**I AM,**” **YAHWEH.**

Genesis 1:1 introduces God as *Elohim*. In the second chapter, which deals with God’s relationship with Adam and Eve, he is *YAHWEH* (Jehovah). So in the creation account of Genesis 1 and 2 we have God creator of heavens and earth, and creator of Man and Woman in eternal God’s own immortal image. To derail the force of this message by focusing our arguments over how long, by our standards, God took to create by His inscrutable methods does a gross disservice to the depth of foundational meaning engraved in these two chapters. God said it, it happened. If God had not so spoken, it could not have happened by “natural” means because there was no “nature” outside of God’s will. And once God has spoken His will, it is not by “natural” means either. Nature is simply God’s will for the physical. “Nature” is nothing more than God’s will being followed by the physical realm He created. We would all do well to learn to follow God’s laws for mankind as faithfully as the physical realm follows God’s laws for rocks. And since rock is a faithful follower of God’s law – *you can bank on that* – rock’s testimony of creation should not be denigrated as inferior in any respect in comparison to our fallible human interpretations of the infallible scriptures. The rocks and the Book are both infallible. Unfortunately, our human interpretations of either are not.

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<sup>14</sup> Just as recent creation advocates charge that it blasphemes God’s power to claim creation spanned billions of years, so skeptics of Biblical creation charge that an all powerful god shouldn’t need six days to create. Both miss the point. God had a plan from before the beginning of time regarding His relationship with man, Ephesians 3:11. When God takes His time, it is not for lack of power, but because of divine wisdom and patience for mankind, 2 Peter 3:1-9. Why did God take a whole *six* days to speak His mind, instead of popping everything into place all at once? I believe it was because He was establishing this seven day pattern for the Sabbath. God plans ahead. In fact, the only reference in the rest of scripture to the days of creation is specifically regarding establishing the Sabbath pattern, Exodus 20:11. That is the only doctrinal point ever made in scripture based upon the days of creation. All other doctrines of days, such as duration in hours, go beyond the scriptures.

## Challenges to the Fiat Day Interpretation

The *Fiat Days* approach raises several legitimate challenges. I would not dare suggest Fiat Days is necessarily the foremost or most obvious meaning of the text, nor without any problems. But then all approaches face legitimate challenges which are not necessarily immediately obvious to readers. What follows are ten of the more common challenges to the Fiat Days view, and a response.

**Challenge 1:** The description for each day indicates that everything God said happened instantaneously and immediately in the day He said it.

*Answer:* Not so. On day three God told the earth to produce the plants. That sounds more like a natural process that occurs over its natural cycle, rather than an instantaneous popping into existence out of the ground. Likewise, God told the earth to produce the beasts on day six, but I don't know of anyone who takes that to mean animals literally popped out of the ground instantaneously (or at all). While it is often insisted that Genesis 1 must be understood literally in the most direct fashion possible when it comes to how long a creation day was, such insistence on literalness flies out the door when it concerns statements about the earth producing animals. (This symbolic language *may* be similar to chapter two's description of God forming Adam from dust. I would be hesitant to say exactly what such a descriptive image means in any literal sense other than it was done in a very special manner by God, as a potter forms the pot by the shaping of his hands on the clay. It indicates an intensely personal involvement of God with man.)

On days five and six God said for the fish, birds, beasts and man to multiply and fill the earth. Both those days end with the same "evening, morning, day" formula used for all the other days. But I've never known anyone to claim the animals or mankind literally filled the earth by sunset of those days. The language and command format is *exactly* the same for these commands as for all the commands on the other days, yet no-one even remotely thinks this command happened instantaneously on a single day. Why no-one ever thinks of it happening quickly has nothing to do with the text, but rather what we know *from nature*. We *know* how animals multiply. Since we know that doesn't happen in a single day, it never crosses our minds to consider that this command was fulfilled in the day on which God commanded it. Instead, we have always understood that God pronounced His Will for reproduction, thereby establishing a reproductive design in animals and man for such multiplying to happen according to the natural pace established by the laws of His Will.

That same understanding could easily be applied to all the other commands issued by God during the six days. For example, once we understand that light travels at a finite speed, it never crosses our mind to think that light instantaneously fills the universe when God says, "Let there be light." It is not a question of denigrating God's power. I suppose He *could* have made light to work that way strictly from a power viewpoint, but that is just not the way light is. In His wisdom that's not how God made it to work. Light travels at a finite speed -- *that* is how God made it to work. Traveling at a finite speed, it takes a while for light to get places. It is not instantaneously in place between star and human eye. That's a testament to God's wisdom and power, not an argument against Him. If light traveled instantaneously, it seems likely there could be no physical universe at

all, but that's a topic for another essay. <sup>15</sup> There is a natural process we now call quantum-chromo-electro-dynamics, created by God, which light obeys. Such process is simply another way of saying time is involved. God created time. For God to use time to His purposes in no way minimizes the fact of God being in control every moment of the way.

**Challenge 2:** The text indicates the days were consecutive by the expression, “Then God said ...” Also, if the days are not back-to-back consecutive days, that contradicts Exodus 20:11.

*Answer:* As to the introductory expression “Then God said ...” it is supposed that this connecting phrase (the *vav* consecutive) ties the new day directly to the close of the prior day thus forcing the conclusion that these are consecutive days. However, this is not necessarily so in Hebrew narrative. Hebrew sequencing was more topical than chronological. Hebrew narratives typically finish one topic before moving to the next, even if the topics overlap or are separated in time. A set, sequence, or list of such conjoined narratives is typically joined by the word “and” or “then” much as is found in the Gospel of Mark. Essentially, this is the Hebrew equivalent to our bulleted list, and does not in general indicate temporal sequence, but rather, topical sequence. This format is called parataxis. This narrative form is well illustrated by the genealogies in Genesis 5 in which each genealogical section is ended before the next begins, even though the actual life spans overlapped in time. Hear Dr. James G. Murphy, professor of Hebrew at Presbyterian College, Belfast, and Genesis commentator, as he spoke to this point concerning the parataxis of Genesis 1:

“There is therefore a sequence in the order of time. In a chain of events, the narrative follows the order of occurrence. Collateral chains of events must of necessity be recorded in successive paragraphs. The first paragraph carries on one line of incidents to a fit resting place. The next may go back to take up the record of another line. **Hence a new paragraph beginning with a conjoined verb is to be connected in time, not with the last sentence in the preceding one, but with some sentence in the preceding narrative more or less distant from its terminating point.** Even a single verse may be a paragraph in itself referring to a point of time antecedent to the preceding sentence.” <sup>16</sup> (emphasis added, HR)

As to the supposed contradiction with Exodus 20:11 -- not so. Exodus 20:11 is making an analogy between the 6+1 form of God's work-rest cycle as a pattern for the Israelites' 6+1 work-rest cycle. The fourth law does not depend on the days of creation spanning only 144 hours, but rather it uses the “the work six, rest on the seventh” format. For example, just for the sake of illustration, let's assume that each creation pronouncement actually took only one minute of the day. Genesis 1:5 still reads “was evening, was morning, one day.” Then Exodus 20:11 would still make just as much sense as is. God worked for six of His days and rested on the seventh, so Israel you shall work for six of your days and rest on the seventh. Similarly, according to the Day-Age view, each day of creation could have been several millennia, but Genesis 1 could still easily call it a day within accepted literal meanings of the word *yom*. Exodus 20:11 would still make just as much sense: “Since God worked for six days and rested on the seventh, so shall you work for six days

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<sup>15</sup> The short version is that the finite speed of light is a fundamental constant in the law of gravity (general relativity), electromagnetic forces, nuclear forces, chemistry and quantum physics. Making the speed infinite also makes it a non-physical entity (fundamental physical properties are never *infinite*), and hence negates all the laws of nature.

<sup>16</sup> Murphy, James G., 1863, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark). Page 39.

and rest on the seventh.” Exodus 20:11 is an *analogy* based on the 6+1 formula, not a definition of the hourly duration of the days of creation. The conservative Old Testament and Hebrew language scholar Gleason Archer makes this same point in his *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* concerning Exodus 20:11.

Sidebar: Consider this exchange between Joe and Bill one Sunday morning after church.

“Hey Joe, I see you’ve got that Mustang out in the yard with a For Sale sign on it. Did you have to work on it all day Saturday?”

“Oh no, yesterday I was finally able to take a day off. I was finished and put it out front with the sign on it, but I spent six busy days getting it back into that mint condition.”

“Really! I had no idea. What all did you have to do to it?”

“Well, the first day I took out the engine and transmission, since it needed a new camshaft; and the torque converter and front pump had to be replaced.”

“Then the next day I put all that together and back in.”

“Then I decided to sand off all the old paint from the hood and trunk and patched a few of the door dings and dents. Let’s see, that made a third day.”

“Painting it took a fourth day.”

“Then it needed new tires, balancing, an alignment, brakes, oh, and the alternator went bad. That made a fifth day.”

“Then, finally I decided to replace all the upholstery and have the flip top reconditioned. You know how it goes -- one thing leads to another and so when it was finally all done Friday I was really glad to see that beauty ready to go. I hope I can get my money back out of it. So anyway, I finally got to take it easy and enjoy my Saturday yesterday.”

Later at lunch, Joe said to his wife, “Honey, I’m really glad to get our Saturdays back. I’m sorry it took so long. Giving every Saturday these past six weeks to that car really consumed me. And of course, practically every day at work I was thinking and planning and getting parts at lunch. I got home so late from work I couldn’t really do much in the evenings, so it was really nice of the boys to help out with some of their free time in the afternoons. Now I’m not all that sure I really want to sell it. It turned out exactly like I planned. I’m really pleased with it. ... You know, Bill seemed really interested in it this morning. I’m wondering if he wants to buy it. He’ll never appreciate what all went into it, but I tried to explain it so that he could at least get the gist of it. You know Bill’s such a klutz when it comes to mechanical stuff. It takes him a week to change a light bulb, but He’s a nice neighbor and a really good Sunday School teacher. If he wants it, I love for him to have it.”

Meanwhile Bill was saying to his wife during Sunday dinner, “That Joe must be beat. He took the whole week off and worked like a dog to get that Mustang ready for sale. Did you see it in his front yard? He could pass it off for a brand new ‘66 Mustang right out of the showroom. If I could just get a week off, I’d like to try that sometime.” To which his wife said, “*Right* – like you’d know which end of a wrench is which. There might have been a little more to it than you got from Joe’s six minute rundown.”

See any parallels?

**Challenge 3:** The Fiat Days view makes it look like God used evolution to accomplish creation!

*Answer:* Then I have not clearly explained my belief in fiat creation. This misunderstanding could arise from the discussion of process being involved in creation, according to Genesis 2. (See response to Challenge 1.) Process implies time for sure, but the Fiat Days interpretation leaves open the type of processes used. Does this mean the Fiat Days view endorses the general evolutionary theory for life and man? God forbid -- *not at all!* The process described for the creation of Adam seems to completely preclude the evolutionary hypothesis of human ascent from non-human ancestors. Adam was made from dirt, not animals, or putative pre-human ape-like forebears. Nor do Genesis 1 and 2 indicate that *any* form of life sprang from another pre-existing kind. Indeed, Genesis 1 is very explicit that all the kinds were to follow “after their kind.” This does not remotely resemble the general evolutionary theory of life forming itself from non-living chemicals, and then diversifying from that original primitive cell to become all forms of life on earth. There *are* hints of process in chapter 1 in the statements, “let the earth produce plants,” and “let the earth produce the beasts.” But these do not necessitate an *evolutionary* assumption at all. On the contrary, they indicate in simple language a divine initiation of the natural cycle of life for plants and animals following the laws of physics, chemistry and biology designed by God.

There is no macro-evolution<sup>17</sup> implicit to the Fiat Days view. Both the inspired text and God’s natural revelation indicate that macro-evolution is NOT one of the laws God established in His design. All new kinds come into being at the right moment only because God so spoke on days three, five and six; not because nature randomly evolved all living things willy-nilly from a single ancestral cell. This misunderstanding may also come from some young earth proponents dogmatically asserting that any and all old earth views of creation are tantamount to accepting atheistic evolution. This is pure demagoguery and fear mongering in the name of God. (See the article “*Young Earth or Old Earth Creationists: Can we even talk together?*” at note 2.)

Others charge that accepting the processes suggested by modern physics (*e.g.*, the Big Bang) as a candidate process God used to prepare the earth for His creative work is tantamount to accepting evolution. This is incorrect. The General Theory of Evolution is about how life came to be via *biological* processes. It does not address the formation and change of stars via processes of physics. The General Theory of Evolution is not dependent at all upon Big Bang cosmology. Indeed, Darwin formulated the Theory of Evolution in the early 1800’s well *before* the Big Bang was ever suggested in the middle of the twentieth century. If God chose to speak the entire energy-mass content of the universe into existence at the beginning of time, and then wait for that created energy-mass to do what it would by obeying the laws God designed for energy-mass (which means a spreading and cooling from infinite density energy-mass) – so be it. Nothing in Genesis 1 or the

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<sup>17</sup> **Macro-evolution** is another name for the general theory of evolution, which holds that all life diverged by evolutionary processes from an original germ cell, or possibly multiple germ cells. These germ cells are likewise proposed to have evolved from non-living chemicals under specialized conditions on the early earth, such as found around hydrothermal ocean vents. Macro-evolution must be distinguished from micro-evolution. **Micro-evolution** is the adaptive process whereby populations of organisms adapt to environmental changes by naturally selecting pre-existing traits which improve rates for surviving progeny. Microevolution is an observable and repeatable process. Macro-evolution is an extrapolation based on micro-evolutionary adaptation, and has no direct observational evidence at all. Much of genetics and paleontology actually contradicts tenets of the macro-evolutionary hypothesis.

entire Bible speaks against such a view. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” That statement sounds disarmingly correct to modern cosmology.<sup>18</sup>

The Big Bang *presumes* creation from nothing; it is not an alternative to *ex nihilo*<sup>19</sup> creation at all. Rather, it affirms creation. The data upon which the Big Bang theory of cosmology is based, and indeed the theory itself, argues in a very dramatic and convincing manner for a singular beginning for the entire universe, *i.e.*, heavens and the earth.<sup>20</sup> Naturalistic atheists *hate* Big Bang cosmology precisely because it shows there indeed was a *beginning* to time, space, energy and matter.<sup>21</sup> Such a heavy theological finding is pure anathema to a philosophical naturalist/materialist. The philosophical implications of a universal beginning are *overwhelming*: a beginning of *everything physical* requires a Beginner outside of everything physical. Such requires a *transcendent* Beginner with sufficient power and wisdom to be an adequate cause of this universe. In short, a Big Bang requires a transcendent god just like the one in the Bible who speaks from on high and causes it to come to pass by the power of His Word: Jehovah God, Eternal God, I AM God. And what does a God-decreed Big Bang of something-from-nothing get us? A wet formless void earth, just like we read of in Genesis 1:2, and just like we see for all the other planets we can observe in the universe. Without God speaking it into shape, we get nothing more for earth. Earth is where we really can begin to see the hand of God as the creator of our special world. It is a very unique little blue planet just right for God to work out His plans for mankind. It was indeed *very good*. (See Brown and Ward’s *Rare Earth*, for more insight into how unique the Earth is, especially regarding its suitability for intelligent life.)

**Challenge 4:** If creation occurs over a long duration, how did plants live for so long without the sun? Nature has to be fully formed all at once, it can’t come into existence spread out over eons.

*Answer:* This challenge forgets that God decreed light for the formless earth on day one, and thereafter there was evening and morning. Thus plants did *not* have to survive for eons without light. Light was decreed on day one and a day-night cycle was operating on earth prior to the call for plants’ arrival.<sup>22</sup> However, it is very likely from earth science that the earth’s first atmosphere

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<sup>18</sup> For example, read Robert Jastrow’s *God and The Astronomers*, in which he closes his tour of Big Bang cosmology by saying theologians knew millennia before astronomers that the universe had a something-from-nothing beginning of space, time and matter which lies outside the bounds of the laws of physics.

<sup>19</sup> Augustine’s term for the idea of creation of something from nothing, a strictly Divine capability of First Cause.

<sup>20</sup> “The universe began in a colossal explosion in which energy, space, time and matter were created. There is little doubt of this among scientists.” Colin Ronan, *The Natural History of the Universe*, McMillan, ‘91. Page 1.

<sup>21</sup> Such as Carl Sagan (*Cosmos*) or Eric Lerner (*The Big Bang Never Happened*), S. Weinberg, G. Burbidge, *et al.*

<sup>22</sup> While not a part of the Fiat Days view explicitly, I believe a good case can be made that the sun, moon and stars were already in existence when God began forming the earth from its void state into a suitable habitat for man. It is important to note that Genesis 1 does not claim the sun was created on day four. The word for create (Hebrew: *bara*) is very special and is used very sparingly in only three cases in Genesis 1: verses 1, 21, and 27. Everywhere else other words are used such as “let be” (Hebrew: *hayah*) or “made” (Hebrew: *asah*) The first use of *bara* is for creation of the **heavens** and earth. By all understandings of language and how the earth system is designed to work, this would include the sun, moon and stars. Thus on day one, by God’s fiat, there is light, *sunlight*, on earth, and day and night begins. However, we would not expect the sky to have been clear at first in the earth’s history. If the sky is not clear, diffuse light might still penetrate, but no sun, moon or stars would be distinctly visible, nor would they have a strong seasonal effect on the earth. It would have been like a greenhouse all the time at first, which sounds like a good plan regarding plans which follow on day three. Apparently the full seasonal order is not established until day four of God’s fiats. On day four God says, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years.” Thus this is

would have been too dense to actually *see* the sun, moon or stars. Hence, it would have been like a very overcast day in which day and night still occur, but no sun is visible. Or, like it is on Venus still today. On day four the sun, moon and stars are made to serve as timekeepers for years and seasons in addition to days, which had already began with day one. One possibility is that with the fiat of day four the sky was changed so the heavenly bodies could be observed and operate in a new and more direct manner upon earth's surface in preparation for the calling forth of animal life beginning with the fiats of days five and six.

In the larger picture, this challenge assumes God can only create within some presupposed time constraint inferred from present day operations. This unnecessarily limits God. If God wants to stretch things out, the way the natural record indicates He did, then so be it. I would further suppose in that case that God knew what was best, rather than us.<sup>23</sup> The natural record also indicates that things seemed to work quite nicely coming into existence in an orderly fashion over eons. Apparently, this challenge isn't even a physical constraint, much less a divine constraint. An analogy might be made with building houses. All elements of a house depend on each other: the foundation supports the walls and roof, and the walls and roof protect the foundation, etc. However, it would be folly to argue that therefore houses must be built instantaneously. Instead, we understand that houses need to be built at a pace and in a sequence consistent with the materials and processes used to make a house according to its builder's design. So it was with creation.

Imagine describing how to build a house in only 31 verses. Why would we suppose that Genesis 1 contains all the details for creating the whole universe? As already explained, that was not its purpose at all. Indeed, if this Fiat Day approach is off the mark anywhere, it is likely to be in trying to read Genesis 1 as having anything to do with what has been learned by observing nature. It never was intended to be a science text, not even a very primitive one. Instead, Genesis 1 assured the Israelites that all those things so readily observed to exist and so readily worshipped (the sun, stars, moon, animals, waters, land, skies, man) were instead all created and made by God according to His purposes and by the power of Him just saying so. It suited His purposes perfectly. It was very good.

**Challenge 5:** It wouldn't take a full day just for God to *say*, "Let there be light."

*Answer:* Correct. The Fiat Days view does not imply that a whole day is required by God to form any of the pronouncements. But turning this challenge about, it would be just as fair a criticism of the young earth interpretation to say that a whole day is not required for God to instantaneously create light, so the young earth twenty-four hour creation day suffers from its own challenge. No young earth proponent of consecutive twenty-four hour creation days

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better understood to be a pronouncement of the time keeping role the heavenly bodies perform regarding earth's cycles, not a statement of initial origin. There is a big difference in saying, "Let there be ..." and saying, "Let there be **for** ..." The fiats of day four are of the latter form. The word for create (*bara*) is not used regarding day four's fiats. If the Holy Spirit chose not to use that word for day four, I shall not presume to use it for Him. Further, in verse 16 the text says God *made* (*asah*) rather than *created*. The idea of *asah* is to form from pre-existing parts or materials, rather than initial creation. Thus I believe the text tells us the sun was created in verse 1 and begins the day-night cycle on day one, and for daily timekeeping, and for seasons and years on day four, possibly by changes made to the sky rather than to the heavenly bodies themselves.

<sup>23</sup> It is ironic that this observation about limiting God by our present day understanding is a charge often leveled by recent creation advocates *against* ancient earth creationists. It is a sword that cuts equally well both ways.

understands that God *needed* six twenty-four hour days. For example, they argue that the light was created to be everywhere instantaneously. Thus begging the question of what did God do with the rest of the first twenty-four day? I believe it is better for both views to understand these statements in an entirely different manner. For example, if I say I was born in 1952, no-one understands that to mean I think it took a whole year for my birth. Likewise, when God said on day one “let there be light”, no-one should understand God to mean He *needed* twenty-four hours to say it.

**Challenge 6:** When the Hebrew word *yom* is used with a number in scripture, it always means a twenty-four hour day. Therefore the creation days are twenty-four hour days, not long ages.

*Answer:* First, the grammatical premise of this challenge is fatally flawed. There is no such rule of Hebrew grammar that supports this claim. One will not find such a rule in any standard text on Hebrew grammar. Further, there are certainly instances in the Bible where this claim is demonstrably false. For example, Deut. 10:10, as noted in Young’s concordance, uses the word *yom* with the cardinal “one” (exactly as in Genesis 1:5) to mean forty days, not one 24 hour day. Hence, it is translated “the first time” rather than “day one” which would make no sense in that verse. So *yom* with a number does not always mean a twenty-four hour day. There are other similar examples, but one example suffices to show the fallacy. (See 1 Sam 7:2, 1Chr 29:27, Hosea 6:2, and Zech 7:14.) Of course there *are* many cases where day with a number means a calendar day since most such instances involve the “seventh day.” This of course refers to a particular day of the week. And since the seventh day was so prominent in Jewish life, this form (day + number) shows up often in scripture. But the fact that it *usually* means something doesn’t mean it must *always* mean that. This challenge is based upon a false rule of Hebrew grammar.

Second, this challenge is irrelevant to the Fiat Day view, since the Fiat Day view *accepts* that the usage of *yom* in Genesis 1 most probably means a calendar day based primarily upon the “evening to morning” formula.

**Challenge 7:** Jesus’ marriage reference arguing “from the beginning of creation” in Mark 10:6 clearly shows that the creation was a very short period consistent with a week, not spread out over a long time.

*Answer:* This is a fairly recently-voiced argument as far as I can find. No commentary I’ve researched seems to be aware that Jesus was really commenting on the young-earth/old-earth issue when He gave this teaching on the permanence of marriage. Uniformly among the commentators, His reference is simply taken to mean that ever since the very first marriage, God’s design for marriage was one man with one woman for life. The force of Jesus’ argument is carried by referencing the first *marriage* of male and female during the creation, not when the first *moment* of creation occurred. The parallel passage in Matthew 19:4 explicitly makes this point. So when Mark records “from the beginning of creation” in the context of God’s design for marriage, it is clearly seen that Jesus refers to Genesis 2:21-25, and clearly NOT Genesis 1:1.

This argument is self defeating if it is taken as literally as the argument presumes. If Jesus really meant that marriage existed from the *beginning* of creation, then Jesus was wrong, which is inconceivable. The *beginning* of creation is Genesis 1:1. The inspired text says so. Marriage is

the very *last* event in the whole creation account, not the beginning event. It is part of the day-six events, as recorded in Genesis 2:23-24. If meant to be taken so literally regarding the span of the creation week, Jesus should have said from the *end* of creation, not from its beginning. For Jesus to be wrong by six days is just as huge a challenge as to be wrong by six millennia – but only if He meant it to be taken precisely in the first place, as this challenge incorrectly presumes.

Now, those who advocate this challenge argue that it's okay for Jesus to speak of a mere six days as "the beginning," but inconceivable that He would accommodate a span of billions of years as "from the beginning." That of course presumes that God experiences the same time limitations as we do. But of course scripture explicitly tells us God does not experience time as we do. In particular, Psalms 90:1 and 2 Peter 3:8 both inform us that God indeed sees what are mind-boggling millennia from our view as mere days from His view. So, this challenge is explicitly defeated by scripture. Also consider that God *often* speaks of long time frames in terms that would seemingly indicate a very brief span. For example, in Act 2:16 Peter tells us at Pentecost that they were witnessing the fulfillment of the "last days" prophecy of Joel. Yet, instead of those last DAYS encompassing only a few literal days that surrounded Pentecost, the last days period is the whole period that merely began on Pentecost as Christ's reign opens up the kingdom to receive sinners into Christ. What began with those first converts on that day, continues up to now, nearly two thousand years later. "Last days" equals thousands of years. So, it is no linguistic foul in this regard if "beginning days" also spans a much longer time. Therefore, the language of Mark 10:6 does not in any way constrain the length of God's creation process which culminated with the first marriage referenced by Jesus as the basis for marriage union ever since. Beginning days, last days – what a beautiful parallel. Unfortunately, just as the Jews and even early Christians mistook the prophecies of last days and judgment as being very immediate and short term, so now many mistake the language of creation as meaning it must have all been over and done with in a matter of hours. We make the same interpretive mistake on both ends of the time spectrum.

Today, when we want to cite book, chapter and verse we use the system published in today's Bibles. In Jesus' day there was no such system. To give a scripture reference in those days, teachers of the Law would cite the reference by the name of the prophet, or as part of the Law, Psalms or Prophets (e.g., Luke 24:44), or by citing the passage intended, or by summarizing the incident involved. In Mark 10:9, as any good teacher of God's Word does, Jesus is giving His scripture reference: Genesis, The Beginning of Creation. This was especially forceful for Jesus' argument because He thus showed that from the very first marriage ("Remember, it's back there in Genesis in the story about the beginning of creation.") ... from the very first marriage, God's will has been the same: one man with one woman for life. It's a far stretch to make Mark 10:6 into commentary on the span of the prior creation week. Notice that in this passage Jesus said nothing at all about the days of creation. To claim He did is a gross twisting of the scriptures to prop up a preconception being imposed upon inspired text.

**Challenge 8:** If the six days of creation are spread out over vast eons as God-decreed natural processes operate, then animals were dying for a long time, in contradiction to the doctrine that all death on earth being the result of Adam's sin, as taught by the Apostle Paul in Romans 5-6 and 1 Cor. 15.

*Answer:* That doctrine is flawed. The scriptures do not anywhere teach that no animals died before Adam and Eve sinned. No animal death before Genesis 3 is an inferred doctrine that is not so stated in scripture. Romans 5-6 (and 1 Cor. 15:22) concerns only the death of *man* as a result of *man's* sin. It argues a contrast between Adam and Christ. By Adam sin entered the world and death by sin. In contrast, Christ brought salvation from sin to **mankind**. If the death that came by Adam's sin encompassed the death of animals, then the salvation that comes by Christ also "saves" the animals from their sin. This is untenable. This doctrine of no-animal-death-before-Adam's-sin was not actually taught by Paul. He was only speaking of human sin, human death and human salvation. Notice that Romans 5:12 is explicit in this regard. "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all *men*, because all sinned." All *men*, not all living creatures.

However, advocates of the no-animal-death-before-sin doctrine point back to Genesis 1:31. It states that God viewed the whole creation in its completion and pronounced it "very good." The self-serving claim is made that if animals had been dying it wouldn't have been possible for God to say it was a very good creation. This is pure speculation. And it is circular speculation at that. It presumes what it argues: that "very good" equals "no animal death." If God designed a world to perfectly accomplish His purposes (and He did), and in that world which perfectly accomplishes His purposes, animals die according to His perfect design for their role in creation, then who is so presumptuous to say God cannot pronounce His perfectly suited creation "very good?"

*Answer:* Many young earth proponents say if there was *any* death, or even any pain, it wasn't "very good," it wasn't a perfect creation. Often times such believers have told me their belief in no-animal-death-before sin is because of their belief in certain doctrines concerning original sin. Many believers extend the idea of death as a consequence of original sin, to include all death of all living things as a consequence of Adam's original sin "infecting" all mankind and all creation with sin and death. It is absolutely true that sin entered the world of men with Adam and Eve's first sin, but the Bible does not teach that all men are sinners because of *inheriting* Adam's sin. This idea of an inherited *guilt* of Adam's original sin is directly refuted by the prophet Ezekiel in 18:14ff. Rather the biblical idea is that the world into which each person is born is since then a world in which sin dominates the lives of humans, and it has been so since the day of Adam and Eve, so even our loving parents are sinners just as were Cain and Abel's parents. On that day the "world" was 100% infected with sin. Every living soul (Adam and Eve) were sinners. And it has remained so ever since. Thus we are born into sin, as David noted in Psalms 51: 5. David wasn't a sinner himself as a newborn, although Psalms 58:3 indicates that sin comes very early into the lives of some. (Clearly newborns are not liars – they can't even talk yet. This is an example of poetic hyperbole in Psalm 58.) David fell to the temptations of the world into which he was born and thus he sinned, becoming a sinner along with the rest of us. Satan roams the earth seeking to devour whomever he can, just like he pursued Job – with the Devil's temptations giving way for our sins. It makes for a world of corruption, temptation, evil, suffering and wrath that appeals to the base aspects of our very being (Eph. 2:1-3). Result: every one of us has sinned just as Adam and Eve did (Romans 3:21). Thus, through one man sin entered the world. But we did not *inherit* Adam's original sin. We are all sinners because of *our own* personal sin. Nowhere does the Bible speak of inherited sin, other than to say explicitly it *isn't* inherited from father to son. So there is no reason to extend the consequences of Adam's original sin to the animal and plant world.

Plants and animals die because the “very good” perfect design created by God for plants and animals includes their physical demise, not because Adam sinned.

Were it not for the tree of life in the garden, it seems the same natural end would have prevailed for Adam and Eve, but by the grace of God, there *was* a tree of life for them. They were protected from physical death until they were prevented from eating of that tree, as a consequence of their sin. Then, they died spiritually being separated from God; and from that day forward they were dying physically as well, Genesis 5:1, as promised by God in 2:17. Without their sin, neither form of death would have happened. The same is true for us. We die physically because that’s the way God designed our physical bodies and we do not have access to the tree of life to prevent it. We die spiritually when we sin, and thus become separated from God because we cannot stand before Him in our un-right state. And one cannot do anything to recover righteousness lost. We all do it, we all sin. All except Jesus. Once Jesus came and overcame sin, He also overcame death. Just as in Adam all died, so in Christ all are made alive. He took the sting out of death so that believers no longer fear physical death because we have been made alive, reborn in baptism, (John 3 and Romans 6) unto a new life in Christ: a spirit life, not a fleshly life. (Romans 8) Sin and Satan no longer dominate us as their slaves (Romans 6). We have been made free from sin! (Galatians 4) Our hope is for a new resurrected body living in Heaven with God where the tree of life stands beside the river of life for the saints to live forever with God! (Revelation 21-22) Sorry – got to preaching there.

Advocates of no-animal-death-before-sin will often point to Paul’s statements in Romans 8:19-22 that the whole creation groans in travail to bring forth the salvation of Christ.<sup>24</sup> Romans 8 has absolutely nothing to do with animal death. Read it carefully. There is not one word about animals dying, pro or con. In fact the figure Paul employs is just the opposite of death: it is a figure of birth, where the birth’s labor is further illustrated by laborers in bondage being set free, just as birth sets free the newborn. Romans 8:19-22 has absolutely nothing to do with death at all, it is a passage of deliverance for all of suffering mankind, and by metonymy all of creation, being born again and set free through eternal life in Christ. Indeed, we know from other passages that this physical creation is not “redeemed” like the souls of man. Rather, it will be *destroyed* by fire so the even the elements burn up, 2 Peter 3:10ff. The saved are collected by Jesus from the earth at His return prior to that eternal destruction, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18. And the destroyed earth is replaced in His scheme of things by “a new heaven and new earth.” 2 Peter 3:13. It is this new heaven and earth which is described in Revelation 21 and 22 as the eternal home of the faithful.

Consider Psalm 104. This psalm is easily seen to be a parallel to the creation account in Genesis, as noted by all the standard commentaries. For example, verse five reads, “He established the earth upon its foundations so that it will not totter forever.” This is clearly about when God created the creation. As part of that description of the creation designed by God in particular notice verse 21.

*“The young lions roar after their prey, And seek their food (meat) from God.”*

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<sup>24</sup> Some even go so far as to argue that with sin came the institution of the fundamental law of physics, which we call the second law of thermodynamics. It states that all closed energy systems seek equilibrium. Or, in lay terms, all systems run down and wear out. Such an assertion finds no basis in scripture and certainly none from the general revelation.

From this, there should be no question that the creation God designed included the death of animals as part of His overall design from the beginning, not as a consequence of the sin of man. While this may or may not have been the rule within the Garden of Eden, protected by the tree of life, it was how God designed the whole of nature operating outside the garden from the beginning. Eden was a limited place with boundaries set by the four rivers. Beyond that we do not have any inspired description of what the creation was like, unless it is here in the 104<sup>th</sup> psalm. In that creation description, animals die.

Consider two arguments that animal death was a known factor to Adam *before* they sinned.

- 1) Eating fruit from the tree of life in the garden of Eden is what kept Adam and Eve alive, not a complete absence of the life-death cycle. In fact, if death could not operate on earth at the beginning why did they need a tree of life to keep them alive? But if death was prevented from operating on Adam and Eve by the tree, nothing in the text indicates that the tree served any similar purpose for the animals. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that animals would have been dying in accord with the natural designs for their bodies and systems. This is a good thing. For example, for Adam to eat and digest an apple requires the death of billions of rapidly reproducing organisms and cells that live in the human gut to aide in digestion. All such microscopic organisms, which play a vital role throughout the entire ecosystem, must die just as rapidly as they reproduce or else before long, a matter of only a few hours actually, the whole world would be just one big bacterial colony. Death of organisms is how life is designed to operate. Human death for Adam and Eve was held off in the garden by eating from the tree of life. As part of their punishment for sin they were isolated from the tree of life. Thus, as Genesis 5 so starkly tells us, “he died.” Ever since, man has not been able to eat from the tree of life. However, one day we will find that tree again beside the river of life in Heaven, Revelation 22. Then we will enjoy the blessings of life eternal with God.
- 2) In Genesis 2:17 God warns Adam not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil saying, “In the day you eat of it, you will surely die.” This implies that Adam already had a concept of death. Today we claim this passage meant his spiritual death rather than physical death. This is claimed primarily because it is rather obvious from the story itself that Adam lived for hundreds of years after the day he first sinned. We correctly note from other passages that spiritual death is a separation from God. Since on the day of their sin they were cast out of the garden and thus separated from God, we conclude that is the type of death meant in God’s warning in 2:17. Well that sounds like a good argument, but ask yourself this. Is that spiritual meaning, “the plain ordinary meaning which Adam would have gotten from the warning?” Or, would Adam more likely have understood it to mean just plain ordinary physical death? I argue that Adam would have been far more likely to have understood this warning only in the sense of physical death of the type he witnessed occurring with the animals, which weren’t protected by the eating from the tree of life. But if that is the case, what about the promise to die the very day they ate from the forbidden tree? I would argue that indeed they did *begin* to die physically that very day. They certainly “died” spiritually as well, but that death hopefully was not permanent. Physical death was certain from that day forward for Adam and Eve. Why? Because God said so.

If God speaks (2:17), it happens (5:5)!

**Challenge 9:** Isn't Fiat Days just an attempt to bend infallible divinely inspired scripture to fit the findings of modern science which is the fallible wisdom of man?

This challenge is based upon a false parallel in logic. The divinely inspired word of God is infallible. Likewise, the divinely created creation is an "infallible" testimony of God's work, Romans 1:19-20. Both are true representations of the Divine. While both these revelations are infallible, both require human understanding to have any meaning to us. This is where the real problem lies. Both our understanding of the scriptures and our understanding of the creation *are fallible*. Both change. Historically, I believe it is a fair representation that religious men have just as poor a track record for properly understanding scripture, as any review of the history of science could provide. This is certainly evidenced by the modern diversity of Christian religions. Such misunderstanding of scripture is illustrated over and over throughout the pages of the Bible itself. In the Old Testament the Israelites did not understand their own religion. In the New Testament the Pharisees did not understand the basics of love and justice. Indeed, Jesus' own disciples did not understand the most fundamental aspects of His kingdom. Religious people get religion wrong just as readily as scientists get their science wrong. Let's not get into a rock throwing contest as to which discipline is better at making and maintaining unfounded dogma. The truth is that both scientists and believers have to change our views to accommodate our growth in understanding of the infallible word of God and improved knowledge of the unchangeable testimony of His creation. To be able to change when shown wrong is sign of wisdom, not weakness.

Dallas Cain provides a good commentary on our changing views of infallible scripture as our understandings of nature change.

"In order to be thorough it may be well to post an important principle of rightly dividing Genesis One. In scripture God accommodates man's level of understanding. This is true in spiritual matters as well as in references to "space and time." The message of redemption is primary, so scripture seems to speak to man in terms of his limited knowledge of space and time, so as to go on to redemption without delay. This poses the question, "To what extent may a modern interpretation of Genesis One differ from that of early times?" We now have two experiences recorded in history that read on this question. Scripture accommodated man's flat-earth model, yet later we reassessed the words to confirm that they do not teach a flat earth. And the earth became round. Scripture accommodated man's earth-centered universe, yet later we reassessed the words to confirm that they do not teach a geocentric universe. And the earth became a planet. So it is clear that a modern interpretation of Genesis One may be different from the early understanding in matters of limited space-time knowledge. Today we tenaciously hold on to early man's concept of time in Genesis One. Perhaps it is because we have not discovered a comfortable alternative, in spite of the pressure to do so from geology and from astronomy." <sup>25</sup>

I believe the Fiat Days view described herein offers just such an alternative with which those seeking fidelity to God's total revelation (natural and written) can be *very* "comfortable."

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<sup>25</sup> Dallas E. Cain, *Creation and Carpon's Explanatory Interpretation, c. 1902, A Literature Search*, IBRI Research Report #27 (1985), <http://www.ibri.org/27creation.html>, mirrored at [www.LordiBelieve.org/genesis/capron.html](http://www.LordiBelieve.org/genesis/capron.html)

**Challenge 10:** Isn't the Fiat Days approach really just the same as the Day-Age view?

*Answer:* It does share a similar view of the total time *span* of creation primarily because of the testimony of physical evidence in God's general revelation. Indeed many of these same challenges are lodged against the day-age view. However, the day-age view holds that the meaning of the word "yom" in Genesis 1 actually should be translated as "age" or "time period," whereas the Fiat Day view holds that "yom" in Genesis 1 does indeed mean a calendar day, not an age. The Fiat Day view does see long periods of time in between, or following, the six pronouncement days. So Fiat Day and Day-Age are both ancient creation viewpoints. Hence, both views are closer to each other than to any recent creation viewpoint. The Fiat Days view, in my opinion, does no violence to the text regarding the expression "was evening and was morning, one day" whereas the day-age view seems to require more unnecessary contortions to read that expression as meaning "coming to the end of a sequential indefinite creative time period."

The Fiat Days view that is presented in this paper incorporates elements from *several* interpretive views. It accepts the calendar day meaning of "yom" as does the young-earth view, but avers the days were not necessarily recent. It accepts the ancient age of the earth and universe from the study of natural history. It accepts the possibility of a very long time period between the first two sentences, as does the gap theory (but rejects the creation-destruction-recreation aspects of the gap theory). It recognizes long ages between or after the fiats, whereas the day-age view merges the fiat with the accomplishment. It accepts that the text is highly crafted to speak to the ancient Hebrews steeped in Egyptian-Sumerian culture, as does the framework view of the literary genre of Genesis 1-3. It accepts that it is literal history, but uses some poetic elements and symbols to present the history. Most importantly, Fiat Days accepts that the text of Genesis 1-3 is the absolute, authoritative, infallible, inspired revelation from God, just as is the rest of the Bible. (I believe the same could be said for *all* these other viewpoints as well.) And last, but not least, it accepts the fallibility of all human enterprise, including the possibility that man may not fully understand everything there is to know about creation on the basis of God's rather limited revelation in scripture about beginnings. But I am fully confident that any man, at any time, with any background, can know enough about creation from reading the scripture to understand the rest of the Bible, which is all predicated upon the fact that God alone is the Creator, which is the essential lesson of Genesis 1.

***"Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is One."***

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## Some Other Comments In Support of a Fiat Day Interpretation

The creation account in Genesis is a highly crafted and magnificent piece of literature in its own right.<sup>26</sup> For example it is often noted that the first three days are days of forming, whereas the last three days are days of filling. So day four corresponds to day one, day five to day two, and day six to day three. Genesis 1 is sufficiently complex to challenge mortal minds yet today, while being highly repetitive and using an extreme economy of vocabulary typical of early Hebrew. It is one of the finest pieces of Hebrew literature extant. It is certainly not “a simple little story.” It has a clear direction moving from God outside of the heavens and earth – into a nothingness, to a void something-ness earth, through a forming and filling process for the earth, to a finished garden paradise where man reflects God’s image. The day formula itself (evening, morning, day) may be a reflection of this overall theme of creation as a celebratory *progression* from void to filled, from dark to light, from timeless to cycled, from bare nothingness to verdant garden, from lifeless to living, from evening, to morning, to a new DAY!

This thematic view is further supported by the structural form of the repetitive expression. The formula is very alliterative, even poetic: *Hayah ereb hayah boqer yomh echad*. A translation in English that carries some sense of the alliteration and rhythm could be:

“be dusk, Be Dawn, DAY - *One.*”

“be dusk, Be Dawn, DAY - *a Second.*”

“be dusk, Be Dawn, DAY - *a Third.*”

“be dusk, Be Dawn, DAY - *a Fourth.*”

“be dusk, Be Dawn, DAY - *a Fifth.*”

“be dusk, Be Dawn, DAY - *The Sixth.*”

The numbers in this rendition are also true to the Hebrew text. Day one is numbered by the cardinal “one,” whereas all the others are indicated by an ordinal: “second, third ...” etc. Also, days two through five are left indefinite (*a second, a third*) whereas only day six uses the definite article “*the sixth.*” The sixth day is clearly more significant in the series of six because it is the day God made man in His image – which is the focus of Genesis 2, and the rest of the Bible. The NASB is very careful to be accurate in these particulars, unlike some more popular versions. Check it out.

When Genesis is read this way (day one, a second day, a third day, a fourth day, a fifth day), the days of creation take on a form which much more strongly supports a view of the days as six distributed days upon which God made His pronouncements, rather than six contiguous twenty-four hour days. So there is *within the text itself* a significant indication pointing to *discontinuous* days. This is not a purely artificial overlay being imposed upon the text, as some charge. Some might think such details are trivial and of no significance. However, in any text as economical yet highly crafted as is Genesis 1, we should understand that each and every word is carefully selected for its role in the revelation. The structure is significant. The repetition is significant. The alliteration is significant. The difference of meaning between *create, be, and made* is significant. The difference in the closure of days one through six versus the non-closure of day seven is significant. The difference in the numbering of the days is significant. I fear that the young-earth 24-hour camp often belittles these aspects of the text, while trying to champion the fidelity of text by their (selective) claims for faithful literality.

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<sup>26</sup> For one of the best studies in this regard, I recommend Henri Blocher’s *In the Beginning*, IVP, 1984.

While I think the six days in Genesis 1 are best understood as the calendar days of God's pronouncements, I believe it would be a rather grave mistake to suggest that a divine calendar day for God's work must correspond to the humanly defined "24 hour" calendar day based upon solar days which didn't even begin until day four in the story. This is why I prefer the term calendar day in place of twenty-four hour day, but it still is not much better. Clearly, Genesis presents God to the hearer in anthropomorphic terms: God speaks, He conferences with others, He shapes man with His hands, He works by day, He walks in the garden, He can be hidden from, He takes a rest at the end. But it would be a grave mistake to insist that such accommodative, anthropomorphic descriptions of deity should be taken to mean God literally has a voice box, hands, feet, needs daylight for His labors, and took a nap afterwards. Genesis 1 is trying to explain divine mysteries to us in terms both ancient Hebrews and we would *understand*. We should never presume that the simplicity of the ancient language reflects simplicity of the events. *Ex-nihilo* creation is fundamentally beyond human comprehension.

So I prefer an anthropomorphic interpretation for the six divine "calendar" days of creation rather than the common young-earth terminology of "a week of seven consecutive, literal 24 hour days." Maybe it isn't much different, but I like it better. I don't know how many "hours" are in a divine creation day, nor do I see how that matters in the least to any biblical doctrine. I would suppose that if we had been there during creation with God, we would have been perfectly happy with the term "day" for the days of creation, regardless of how many hours the day spanned under those circumstances. And so, I am perfectly happy to believe *and teach* the six day creation, just as does Genesis 1.

It is interesting that when God speaks to our presumptions about how quickly He should do things, He twice reminds us that with God a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. The first use, Psalms 90:4, is clearly in the context of creation comparisons. Later, Peter borrows the language of Psalms 90 to address skeptical expectations concerning judgment day, 2 Peter 3:8. The psalm concerns the beginning of time, whereas Peter is concerned with time's end. Maybe we should not expect that the beginning and end of time in God's realm would be subject to the same constraints as we experience in day-to-day life during our puny seventy or so years here in this life. So, I believe we should be hesitant to insist that *any* view of the duration of the creation week days "must" be the only correct view. This certainly applies to the Fiat Day view as well as all others. Such an "insistence" is the chief mistake I believe the young-earth camp makes. A plausible, though now unlikely, interpretation became pushed to the point of insisted acceptance on a plane with core doctrines, at which point for some it becomes a militant campaign of enforcement by ridicule, misrepresentation, inflammatory rhetoric, black-listing and even outright physical threat. This is my conservative religious heritage at its worst. Such behavior does not draw people to Christ, but rather is found to be repulsive to all but the most hardened.

It is important to emphasize the aspect of creation in our doctrine that God's word emphasizes. Hebrews 11:3 tells us "*By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which were visible.*" The Apostle John begins his Gospel with, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" John 1:1. God upholds all things *by the power of His word*, Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 1:17. The covenant of Christ (the New Testament) emphasizes God as the Creator *by His Word*. No-where does the Bible emphasize the *quickness* of a creation day as a point of doctrine, nor even comment

upon such.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the *hourly duration* of a creation day must not be made into doctrine. Statements such as, “the six creation days can only be properly understood to be six consecutive twenty-four hour days” goes *far* beyond the special revelation of God, and seems to be strongly contradicted by God’s general revelation in the creation itself. Let us beware of insisting on doctrines for which we cannot produce a book, chapter and verse promoting that doctrine, and which God’s own evidence provided in His creation strongly argues against.

For example, one Mr. Haile, a young earth advocate, suggested the following proposition for a debate: **“The Bible teaches that in six, literal, 24 hour, consecutive days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.”** This should be an easily won debate. If *the Bible* actually teaches this, simply cite the book, chapter and verse and the debate is over. Since this proposition is suggested for debate it must mean that such a book, chapter and verse does not exist. Of course the words *literal*, *twenty-four hour*, and *consecutive* are never found in any text of the Bible regarding creation, or anything else. These words of this proposition are *overt additions* to the words of God at Exodus 20:11. Thus the proposition is not a *BIBLE* teaching. It is nothing more than just the opinions of the crafty debater as he seeks to establish his opinion as doctrine. (See [www.lordibelieve.org/adding.html](http://www.lordibelieve.org/adding.html) for this source.)

When was creation? The Bible answers that question. **“In the beginning.”** Genesis 1:1. Let us *all* use the **Bible’s** answer when answering Bible questions about creation dates.

If we *insist* upon having a specific answer for the age of the universe or the earth, then we shall have to seek that answer from God’s general revelation of Himself in the creation. The Bible’s only answer to the “How old?” question is, “In the Beginning.”

Whether recent or ancient, creation was still “in the beginning.” In that there is a beautiful faith-building **agreement** between God’s revelation in nature and the Bible on this matter.<sup>28</sup>

(See the [Appendix](#) for the Genesis 1 text in a *Fiat Days* parenthetical format.)

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<sup>27</sup> If Psalms 90:4 (a day is as thousand years) applies specifically to the six creation days of Genesis 1, which I doubt was the psalmist’s point, then it argues *against* any 24 hour creation day doctrine, not for it.

<sup>28</sup> Contradiction comes from the atheists’ camp when they boldly assert that “The universe is all that is, or was, or ever will be.” (e.g., Carl Sagan, *Cosmos*, his opening sentence.) This view of philosophical naturalism is soundly contradicted by Genesis 1, and now mainstream science also understands that there really was a beginning. (See notes 18 and 19.) The cosmological data demands it, no matter how “philosophically repugnant” such a conclusion may be to a materialist philosophy of nature. “Philosophically repugnant” was a comment proffered by Nobel laureate Arthur Eddington when informed of Edwin Hubble’s data for expansion of the universe. His data was the first fundamental observational confirmation of an initial beginning of the universe. Hubble’s data confirmed the initial beginning singularity which Einstein’s theory of General Relativity had predicted, though Einstein himself discounted such a possibility until he saw the expansion with Hubble. Other confirmation of the initial beginning comes from Robert Wilson and Arno Penzias’ observation of the pervasive low-temperature thermal background radiation observed throughout the heavens. This is understood to be the heat left over from the extremely hot initial “explosion”, now cooled to about 3 Kelvin. More recent measurements show very small fluctuations in the background consistent with the condensation of matter out of the high energy fields soon after the beginning. Hawking and Penrose later showed that a universe with a beginning and exhibiting the properties of basic geometry must also have been the beginning of time, so that now physicists speak of the beginning of space-time and energy-matter all from an initial singular “explosion” of something from nothing: **Creation!**

*Appendix*

# The Day God Made Heaven and Earth

(Adapted by H. Roberts from Alan Hayward's *Creation and Evolution*, Bethany House, 1985.)

In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth.

And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Then God said,

**"Let there be light."**

(And there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night.)

*Be Dusk, Be Dawn, Day, One!*

Then God said,

**"Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."**

(And God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. God called the expanse heaven.)

*Be Dusk, Be Dawn, Day, a Second!*

Then God said,

**"Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear."**

(And it was so. God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.)

Then God said,

**"Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth."**

(And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good.)

*Be Dusk, Be Dawn, Day, a Third!*

Then God said,

**"Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth."**

(And it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good.)

*Be Dusk, Be Dawn, Day, a Fourth!*

Then God said,

**"Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens."**

(And God *created* the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.")

*Be Dusk, Be Dawn, Day, a Fifth!*

Then God said,

**"Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind."**

(And it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.)

Then God said,

**"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."**

(And God *created* man in His own image, in the image of God He *created* him; male and female He *created* them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.")

Then God said,

**"Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food."**

(*And it was so. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.*)

*Be Dusk, Be Dawn, Day, the Sixth!*

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

**This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created,  
in the day  
the LORD God made earth and heaven.**