

Why the "Days" CANNOT be "Ages"

DOES IT REALLY MATTER?

Does it really matter whether the "days" of Genesis 1 mean an ordinary day or whether they can be interpreted to mean something else? We must answer that question with an unequivocal and resounding, "Yes!" There is a class of people who judge the inspired and ancient record as unworthy, antiquated, and unreliable for world history. On the other hand, there is a camp of people who believe that the Biblical record is in fact very useful and essential for our understanding of history and the universe. Finally, there is a third group of people, who, while accepting the full inspiration of the Scriptures and the creation of the world, also accept the natural interpretation of geologic ages. Shane Scott, former Bible class teacher at Florida College, wrote an article entitled "The Days of Genesis" (Sentry Mag.; Vol. 21, No. 1). In that article he affirms "The 'days' of creation in Genesis 1 cannot be literal. . ." He also states, ". . . I will argue that the Bible allows for a much older earth, because the days of Genesis 1 should not be interpreted literally," and again, "The days of Genesis 1 may be interpreted literally, but that is not the best biblical interpretation."

While Day-Age theorists hold onto creation, they can essentially be divided into two groups, old earth-old Adam creationists and old earth-recent Adam creationists. Both believe in a very old earth, but they are divided over when Adam was created. Unlike the old earth-old Adam creationists, old earth-recent Adam creationists place Adam's creation around 10,000 to 20,000 years ago. These people (especially old earth-old Adam creationists) are often looked at as being "closet evolutionists" because of their perception of long ages of processes rather than instantaneous creation. Regardless of what position a "Day-Ager" takes, he has no scriptural authority for it and therefore it should come as no surprise if some question their commitment to

creation.

Why does it matter if we believe in ages or not? There are many reasons why, but the one that torments this author the most is over our ability to understand what was written. If we do not accept these "days" as days, then what are they? Why can we not approach the rest of the Bible with the same interpretive method? Does the Bible say what it means or is it merely a book of hollow dictums and dark sayings? For example, when the Bible tells us that man was created from the dust of the earth, does it really mean the "dust" of the earth? When the Bible tells us that Jesus died on the cross, does it really mean that he "died" or was He just sleeping? When the Bible commands us to be baptized for the remission of sins, does it really mean that we should be "baptized"? Does it matter how you approach the scriptures? Absolutely! When one says, "The days of Genesis 1 may be interpreted literally, but that is not the best biblical interpretation," he is wrong! Such an assertion reminds me of the grave warning Paul gave Timothy, "For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions" (I Tim. 1:6, 7 NAS).

While I understand what one means when one says, "interpret literally" but it seems paradoxical to say such. You either *take* it literally or you *interpret* it figuratively. The burden of proof lies on the one who chooses to interpret it figurative! For example, Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16). Literally, Jesus said "he who believes and is baptized shall be saved." This is no interpretation but is what was literally spoken! Is it ethical and respectable to make a Bible passage say the opposite of what it reads? It frightens me that so many, though they will not say they don't believe the scripture, can reach the same result by saying, "That's not my interpretation" and twist the inspired record to say something that is completely different as

night is to day. The Baptists come and interpret Jesus' clear statement to say, "He who believes is saved and should be baptized." "Prove it!" should be our first response to these deceivers. As with Mark 16:16, ask yourself, "What did God literally say in Genesis one?" and then be satisfied with that and preach it as it was written. When one interprets such a passage to mean something that it doesn't say, they need to be able to prove it. That is something a "Day-Ager" cannot do from the inspired record. The bottom line is just that, dear reader; if the Bible does not mean what it literally says, then we do not know and can never know what it truly means with any degree of certainty. Furthermore, we charge God with saying something other than what He means. Are we ready to embrace this kind of hermeneutic?

With this "symbolizing the literal" approach, we could interpret about anything to mean about anything and be just as right as the next "interpreter." Truth becomes subjective and relative with such an approach. The next time you are pulled over for running a stop sign, ask the police officer what "STOP" *really* means and see where it lands you. When he places you under arrest, argue with him on the way down to the station about how the *literal interpretation* is not the best approach.

As a general rule for Biblical interpretation, one should accept everything as it is literally given, unless it creates absurdity. When the literal meaning reaches an absurd understanding, then we must, with caution, interpret the meaning as figurative language. For example, one may say that his computer got a virus and crashed. Literally we would believe that his computer received a viral disease (i.e. common cold, flu, AIDS, etc.) and crashed (i.e., fell on the floor and shattered). This makes no sense literally, as it is impossible for computers to contract literal diseases.

SEVEN REASONS WHY THE SEVEN

DAYS CANNOT BE AGES

1) The days cannot be ages because the day is clearly defined in the context as a literal day. To symbolize "day" in Genesis one into some metaphorical meaning or age is to commit the fatal flaw mentioned above. First, it is dangerous to interpret a word symbolically the first time it is used in scripture. We usually symbolize words only after the literal definition is clearly set forth. For example, when Jesus called himself the "bread from heaven" (Jn. 6:32ff), we understand what He meant by first knowing the literal bread from heaven that was rained upon the children of Israel (Ex. 16:4; Neh. 9:15; etc.). God gave the children of Israel manna, a literal kind of bread. It sustained their lives from hunger as bread does. Yet Jesus symbolized and applied that literal historical event to himself in a figure. This would only make sense if bread from heaven had a previous literal comprehension. The same is true of "day" in Genesis one.

Second it is dangerous to symbolize a term in the same context where its literal *definition* is given. Thus, the Genesis author stressed the definition of what "day" meant. "God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. 1:5; cf. Jer. 33:25-26). Moses tells us that the "light" was "day." Then he further defines "day" comprehensively as the "evening" and the "morning"—thus a solar day. Now, if the days are ages, then the time of light was an age (or perhaps a half age) of time and also the time of darkness was an age (or half age) of time in each of the "day" ages! We would therefore have multiple ages per day. Genesis could not use any clearer language than this to portray an ordinary day. One can say that "days" are symbolic for seconds with as much authority as one can say they are symbolic for ages. If not, why not?

2) The days cannot be ages because of Adam's death.

Adam and Eve were created on day six (Gen.

1:26-31). They lived through day six and day seven too. Was Adam several ages old? Furthermore, Adam's wife conceived and bore Cain (4:1). Then she bore again and had Abel. The Bible says, "And in the process of time it came to pass. . ." (4:3). A literal rendering of what is being said is enlightening. Consider Young's Literal Translation, "And it cometh to pass at the end of days that Cain bringeth. . ." (YLT, 1898), and also, "And in the end of days, it happened that Cain brought. . ." (Green's Literal Translation, 1993). "*At the end of days,*" there goes day seven, eight, nine, etc. Again, was Adam multiple ages old? If we can make the "days" in Genesis one mean ages with no contextual support, why can we not do the same with Genesis 4:3? Then it is said, "So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died" (Gen. 5:5). Interestingly, the inspired record speaks of the seventh day as a day that ended where God "rested" (Gen. 2:2, 3). It doesn't say that God is "resting" as if the day were still going on (cf. Heb. 4:4).

3) The days cannot be ages because of "years" in Genesis 1:14.

If it is true that "days" symbolize ages, then what do "years" symbolize in Genesis 1:14? If "days" are ages then "years" are pointless and cannot be understood. Likewise, if "days" and "years" are ages in Genesis 1, then why not interpret the "days" and "years" in Genesis 5 as ages? Our ability to understand how old Adam was when he begot Seth and how old he was when he died is impossible by this method (Gen. 5:3, 5).

4) The days cannot be ages because of the Sabbath day rest.

Brother Scott in anticipating some objections wrote, ". . .the emphasis on the Sabbath is not on 24 hour days, but on the number SEVEN. After all, the Sabbath principle applied to years (Leviticus 25:4-5), and the jubilee, every seventh sabbath year (Leviticus 25:8-55)."

While it is true that there was a Sabbatical year and a jubilee (seventh Sabbatical year), those years are not said to have been observed because the Lord created the heavens and the earth in six days. Brother Scott's proof is actually proof against him. Leviticus has "years" in its context but the Sabbath day is spoken of with only "days" in its immediate context. The Sabbath "DAY" (not year) is commanded because the Lord created the heavens and earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. It doesn't mention this correlation concerning Jubilee or the Sabbath year. "Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed" (Ex. 31:16-17; cf. 20:9-11). This is speaking about days not years; to put anything else in it is a Scriptural holocaust. Furthermore, Moses reveals Jehovah as having "rested" and "was refreshed" on the seventh day. One is "refreshed" at the end of a rest, not at the beginning (if the seventh-day-age continues today!

5) The days cannot be ages because of what Jesus taught about the creation of Adam and Eve.

Jesus stated, "But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female" (Mk. 10:6). When were Adam and Eve created? Jesus says from the beginning of creation. Day-age advocates contend they were created recently in the long history of the heavens and the earth. Who will you believe? Of course if people don't accept what Moses wrote concerning the creation, that it was in six days (Gen. 1; Ex. 31:16-17) then they won't accept what Jesus says either, "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (Jn. 5:46-47).

6) The days cannot be ages because of Jesus' teaching on tribulation and persecution.

Jesus said, "For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be" (Mk. 13:19). It is evident that Jesus implied that there was human tribulation since the creation. Matthew records, ". . . tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time. . ." (Matt. 24:21). Tribulation has existed from the beginning of the world until the present; yet, only rational beings can undergo tribulation. Therefore Jesus taught that man, since the creation, was afflicted. The honest mind can compare this to Jesus' teaching of Abel and reach the same conclusion. "Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets. . . ' that the blood of all the prophets which was shed **from the foundation** of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel. . ." (Lk. 11:49-51; emp. mine). The prophets of God have been slain from the "foundation" or "creation" (see Weymouth New Testament, 1912) of the world. This places Abel near the creation of the world and not ages afterwards.

7) The days cannot be ages because of sin and death.

If the days of Genesis are ages, then there were organisms living and dying millions of years before the creation of man. Friends, this concept perverts the Bible's teaching of sin and the introduction of death as a consequence of sin. To speak of death as something that predates man and as something that was an initiatory element of God's wonderful creation is to speak in opposition to the way Scripture identifies death, namely as the enemy (I Cor. 15:26). Evolution assumes that death was something that always was, is, and will always be. The Bible clearly teaches that death was introduced through man's sin; not in some other way. One would have to think of the oddity that struck the first couple when that animal(s) was slain to provide

"skins" to cover up their nakedness for their sin (Gen. 3:21). Paul informed the brethren of his day writing, "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (I Cor. 15:21, 22; cf. Rom. 5:12). Paul stresses by the Spirit, "By man came death." Where did death come by? The Bible says "by man," thereby indicating that there was no death before man sinned. In conjunction with this, it is evident that man had sinned from the beginning of the world and was in need of sacrifice (see Heb. 9:26). Below are four more proofs that are given to help establish this truth.

First and foremost, consider that after God created all that was created, the inspired record states, "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (Gen. 1:31). If Adam and Eve were living in a world that had a history of death and disease, could God have said that it was *very good*? Could God have pronounced it "very good" while having Adam and Eve walk atop a fossilized graveyard representative of eons struggled and death?

Second, more proof is found in early man's diet. Man originally was a vegetarian (Gen. 1:29), "And God said, 'See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.'" Where is the authority for early man to eat meat? Obviously there was none or God would never have instructed mankind years later that they could begin to eat meat lawfully (see Gen. 9:3) if it was already lawful to do so. Evidently, what God's creation ate and refrained from eating was of vital importance recall Genesis 2:16-17.

Third, evidence is found in early animal diet for no death or bloodshed before sin. God instructed every beast of the earth, every bird of the air and everything that creeps on the earth to

eat the green herb for food, "and it was so" (Gen. 1:30). We may think it odd for early beasts not to tear each other to pieces. This is the fallacy of looking at today's world and trying to interpret the way the world once operated. This point will be discussed in greater detail later. More than likely animals would obey the Lord's will with this command as well as they would another interesting command found in Genesis 6:20, *to come to Noah*.

Finally, man's sin definitely had an adverse affect on the creation. It should not seem strange to us that man's sin affected the whole world in which he lived as Genesis 3:17 says, "Cursed is the ground for your sake. . ." Whose sake? For Adam's sake! Was the ground cursed before Adam's sin? Furthermore, ". . .the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water" (II Pet. 3:6). Why did God destroy the world with water in the time of Noah? It was because man sinned and rebelled against His will. Man's rebellion affected the whole world in which he lived. The fact that death in general was introduced for man's sin should show the utter disastrous end of sin. We compromise the penalty for sin when we place death before man.

Why is there death, disease and bloodshed in the world today? The answer set forth in God's word is "sin." Death was issued in for the penalty of sin. **Death came by man!** Someone may object with unbelief as to how there could be no death or bloodshed before sin. What if Adam stepped on a nail or twisted an ankle? Again, this simply demonstrates the fallacy of looking at today's world and trying to understand how it once existed. When God upholds neither death, pain, sickness nor wearing out are an issue, "Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell" (Neh. 9:21). Do our clothes wear out today? Do our feet swell today? Well, what if God created His world to originally not wear out except when man sinned? You can also find

evidence of this conclusion with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego when they were thrown in the fiery furnace yet they were untouched and were even without the smell of fire on them (Dan. 3:8-25).

ASK YOURSELF WHY?

Why were these silly theories (day-age, non consecutive day-age; gap, etc.) constructed? Why do people insist that the "days must be ages"? Why? What is the reason for espousing these theories? Does the honest mind read through Genesis 1 and immediately conclude (without any outside influences) that these days were ages? If not, why buy into these imaginative theories to explain the creation? I do not know the motives of some who teach these theories, but I can look at the effects or "fruits" of these theories and see what they all desperately grasp for: *time*. All these theories (like it or not) *buy* time and cram it into the inspired recorded. All these theories are offspring of uniformitarianism and were created to grasp and reconcile long age geology with the inerrant word of God. Why insist on ages? There is nothing in the written text of the Bible that makes one think there are million year ages in the creation week? In fact, the very opposite is true (consider the parallel accounts of the creation miracles by Jesus: creating wine from water, John 2:1-11; feeding the five thousand, Matt. 14:15-21; the raising of Lazarus from a dead and rotting body, Jn. 11; etc.). If the Bible was ambiguous in reference to the "days" of creation, then uniformitarianism would not be controversial today, it could be readily accepted. However, since the Bible is very clear, the controversy exists. It exists only when people insist on twisting and interpreting its passages to make them fit with the human contrived, long age conception of the geologic column; but this attempt is futile. It is like trying to fit a size thirteen foot into a size one shoe. This is where the most blatant inconsistency of all "Day-Age creationists" is found. What rational mind accepts the "scientific proof" for an old earth but

then rejects “scientific proof” for evolution? This is especially bizarre when the evidence of the two is of the same nature and rests on the same assumptions! It is hypocrisy in its purest form to interpret the Bible and insist upon long age geology but then reject the same kind of approach for long age biology. Perhaps some may believe in these fanciful theories innocently without knowing the consequences of such?

PAST EVENTS/PRESENT PROCESSES/REVELATION

Please consider the fallacy of all this. Uniformitarian geology rests on the premise that in order to interpret the past, we must understand the present geologic processes of change. When we look at present day activities, erosion, volcanic activity and other natural processes noting that their effects on the world are gradual, we are right (to some extent). But approaching the fossil record with this interpretation of gradual processes is faulty. Literally, the fossil record is a record of death, not life; anything more than this is mere speculation. Those who cling to geologic ages are only interpreting the fossil record by present day phenomena.; it is no wonder that they approach the inspired record with a mindset to interpret it into long ages.

This is a backwards approach! The present is not a key to understanding the past, but the past is a key to understanding the present. Furthermore, the only way to know the past is by revelation and credible testimony. None of us were at the creation so we cannot know the past unless we know someone who was there, who saw what happened and wrote those things down. For example, how do you know George Washington lived and was the first president of the United States? Have you ever seen him? Has he ever talked to you? But rather we believe George Washington existed because of credible testimony from people who were there and saw him and wrote things down. Likewise, we know One who was there and who had things written down regarding the creation, God. He revealed

these things to us through inspired men (II Pet. 1:19-21). Now, when we go to revelation what do we find? We find that God quickly created the world, “For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast” (Ps. 33:9). Creation was an event, not a process (Heb. 11:3). Jehovah created it “very good” not in chaos (Gen. 1:31). Man sinned and death came about (Gen. 3; I Cor. 15:21). Death walked through the door that sin opened. Man continued to rebel and God destroyed the world with a flood (Gen 7). What would you expect to find if the world really was flooded with water? If you look at the world through revelation, you would expect to find billions of dead things in rock layers that were buried by water all over the world. What do you find in the world? One finds billions of dead things in rock layers buried by water all over the world. When God does things supernaturally, we cannot measure them by a natural method; consequently, we don’t need “progressive time buying theories” to compromise the mighty workings of God. The point is, we cannot look at today’s processes and rely on them to measure the past. We can only know the past by revelation.

Science in all of its research, power and cannot be able to prove what went on in the beginning. It cannot prove or falsify the historical inspired record of God. Creation was a one time event, a historical singularity that cannot be repeated or observed by modern man and therefore cannot be measured by or truly understood by science. Science functions in observation and repeatability and is therefore limited in this sense. We can only know the past by revelation. So when someone comes to you and tries to sell you on the idea that the universe came into existence billions of years ago reply, “Were you there?” This was God’s reasoning with Job, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. . .Have you commanded the morning since your days and caused the dawn to know its place?” (Job 38:4, 12).

Peter noted that these times would come. He wrote, “knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation’” (II Pet. 3:3, 4). People have often overlooked the fact that when God created all things, He created them mature, not as infants who would grow up into maturity. Adam and Eve were created as man and woman. The world was created mature as well, with fruit trees ready to produce, not little seedlings. I am sure if one saw Adam and Eve the day they were created, they would have thought (by today’s processes) that they had been alive living for several years. The idea that “all things continue as they were from the beginning” is exactly what the doctrine of uniformitarianism. See, dear friend, things haven’t always continued as they have at the present rate, and we don’t need theories to accommodate such an erroneous concept.

Suggested readings for further study of books which have influenced some of the points in this article:

- Gish, Duane T. (1985). “Evolution: The challenge of the Fossil Record.” El Cajon, CA: Master Books.
- Ham, Ken (1987). “The Lie: Evolution.” Green Forest, AR: Master Books
- Lubenow, Marvin L. (1992). “Bones of Contentions.” Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Parker, Gary E. (1994). “Creation: Facts of Life.” Green Forest, AR: Master Books.
- Whitcomb, John C. (1986 rev. ed.). “The Early Earth.” Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Whitcomb, John C. (1988 rev. ed.). “The World That Perished.” Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books