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## Are the Days of Genesis 1 Literal?

Eric V. Snow, sermonette, 7-15-2011, UCG-Ann Arbor

Are the Days of Genesis 1 literal 24-hour days? Or are they poetic representations for millions or even billions of years? If a liberal Christian challenged us, could we explain why we believe these days lasted only 24 hours each? Since many non-fundamentalist Christians in the world capitulate to evolution and try to bend their interpretations of Genesis to fit modern

scientific theories, we should be ready to explain why the days of Genesis 1 should be interpreted literally.

S.P.S. The days of Genesis 1 are literal 24 hour days, not long geological ages.

Since we're enjoying God's natural world more directly during the campout this weekend, it's appropriate to give a sermonette on a subject about God's role as the Creator.

Genesis 1:1+, v.5, v. 13 example

The days are literal because some six times statements like these are repeated in this chapter. If Genesis says each day has a "morning" and an "evening," this by itself virtually proves they are literal 24-hour days each.

Consider HWA's standard approach to understanding the Bible: "The Bible interprets itself." How does Gen. 1:5

describes a “day” for us? Here “light” is equated with daytime, and “darkness” with nighttime. The two together make up “one day” (NASB).

Similarly, note Gen. 1:14, 16, 19: “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 (such as the Holy Days), and for days and years . . . And God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night . . . And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.” Can anyone honestly say the meaning of a “day” changed from 12 or 24 hours each between verses 14 and 16 to a billion years each in verse 19? That’s especially absurd when this last verse says, “And there was evening and there was morning”! Maybe the “evening” and the “morning” were 500 million years each!

The days of Gen. 1-2 are referred to with ordinal or rank order numbers, such as second, third, fourth, fifth, etc., with the seventh day, the Sabbath day, the end of a week. Out of over 200 instances in which Old Testament applies an ordinal or limiting number to the word “day,” the literal meaning is intended.

The Hebrew word for day, “yom,” (plural, “yamin”) approximately 95% of the time it occurs (out of some 2000 occurrences), the literal meaning is intended. [We should be familiar with this word from the Holy Day, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.] If Moses really meant a million or more years passed for each day, he could have been inspired to write the word “olam” instead, which means “forever” or “time indefinite.” He also could have used such a combination as “yom rab” [a long day (time)], but he didn’t.

Exodus 20:9-11

The Fourth Commandment directly compares “creation week” to the literal weekly work and rest cycle. Why then should we believe the meaning for the word “day” totally changes in this commandment’s wording? The Sabbath command loses most of its symbolic meaning if the day God rested in Gen. 2:1-3 was some randomly chosen time period in length, not a literal 24-hour day. Henry Morris, “Scientific Creationism,” p. “It is quite clear that the six work days of God are identical in duration with the six days of man’s work week. The basis for this very precise commandment is trivial and vacuous otherwise.”

The Sabbath command uses the plural Hebrew word “yammin” to refer to all the days of Gen. 1 together. And this fact destroys the “day-age” interpretation, for “yammin” is used over 700 times in the Old Testament. Never can it be proven to mean anything other than literal days. For if the seventh day in Gen. 2 was literal in length,

so will be all the others in the “creation week.”

[Genesis 2:4 explained by Num. 7:84, used “comprehensively,” not symbolically, as a summarization statement about a period of time]

Fundamentally, the main reason why people don't want to say the days of Gen. 1 are literal is because of the desire to make its account of origins compatible with the geological column and the radioactive decay dating methods. However, we should let the Bible interpret itself, not scientific “knowledge” based upon questionable assumptions and unproven postulates.

**Conclusion:** If we let the Bible interpret itself, we have to conclude the days of creation were literal 24-hour days. The day-age theory is simply wrong. We shouldn't let the false scientific theories of the world influence what we think the meaning of Scripture is. Instead of using the theory of

evolution to interpret the Bible, instead let's use the Bible to interpret the Bible!

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