

Genesis One and the Age of the Earth

What does the Bible say?

A brief explanation of the Hebrew text of the first chapter of Genesis as it relates to the age of the Earth question

by Rodney Whitefield

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Foreword

This booklet presents, in brief form, some of the results of a much longer work by the author.

Numerous readers of that longer work, *READING GENESIS ONE: Comparing Biblical Hebrew with English Translation*, have expressed a desire for a more succinct exposition of some of the results of that study.

The focus of this booklet is on the translation and meaning of the first 23 Hebrew words of Genesis. Understanding the grammar and meaning of those 23 words resolves long-standing disputes about the Bible's statement about the age of planet Earth and the age of the universe.

The Hebrew of some verses will be presented to allow the reader to verify the Hebrew word order of nouns and verbs. More often, a Hebrew word will be inserted into King James Version (KJV) verses in front of the English translation of that word. For example:

^{KJV} Genesis 1:5 And God called the light יום **day**,
and the darkness He called night.

In some examples the Hebrew word יום and a phonetic pronunciation of that Hebrew word will be inserted to replace its English translation. For example:

^{KJV} Genesis 1:5 And God called the light יום “**yom**,”
and the darkness He called night.

The יום is the singular Hebrew word appearing in the Hebrew of the verse. The “**yom**” is a phonetic rendering of that Hebrew word. (“Yom” pronounces like “yome” rhyming with dome or home.)

The procedure followed in each specific instance is chosen to facilitate the reader's understanding of the translation issue or meaning of that verse. Another Hebrew word אוֹ, the direct object marker, has no equivalent in English and is not translated unless it has an attached preposition or ending. Because this booklet is brief, much supporting detail found in the longer work cannot be presented here.

Rodney Whitefield

Age of the Earth: Billions or Thousands?

What does the Bible say? Billions or Thousands?

Historically, the above question became important in the time period from the late 1700s through the early 1900s. By the early 1900s the major Christian groups had examined the text and found consistency between the statements of the first verses of the Bible and the geological and scientific findings of an old universe and an old planet Earth.

Among evangelical Christians, biblical consistency with an old planet Earth and an old universe was exemplified by the views of the writers of *The Fundamentals* in the early 1900s. These scholars held both long time (day-age) and 24-hour views of the six creative times, but were united in viewing the biblical text as being consistent with an old universe and an old planet Earth. By the mid 1950s, the 6,000 to 10,000 year old Earth view was held by only a small number of believers. In retrospect, the issue was considered so well settled that the upcoming new generation of pastors had been inadequately informed of the biblical basis for the consistency between the statements of the first verses of the Bible and the scientific findings of an old planet Earth.

Why is it Important?

The Bible claims to be truth.

If the Bible does not represent truth, or if those opposed to the teachings of Christianity can show that the Bible includes errors, the claims of Christianity are impaired.

If a group interprets the Bible in a manner different than that which the Hebrew text says, the truth claim of the Bible is impaired.

Today, the truth of the Bible is under serious attack based upon the claim, by some, that the Earth is only about 6,000 to 10,000 years old.

For evangelism, the issue is clear. Non-believers who decide to explore the Bible and the claims of Christ will typically start with the first page of the Bible. If the opponents of Christianity can impugn the truthfulness of the Bible on the first page, the claims of Christ may never be seriously considered.

This book will:

1. Show why the first verses of the Bible are consistent with an old Earth and an old universe.
2. Explain and refute the argument used to interpret the first verses of the Bible to arrive at a claimed 6,000 to 10,000 year old Earth and universe.

Next: The KEY Issues

Key Issues about the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1-31 (The Key Issues will be discussed later in detail.)

Key Issue 1: The Text and Interpretation of Genesis 1:1

The Hebrew words of Genesis 1:1 are ordered in the sequence that Biblical Hebrew uses to indicate pluperfect action, i.e., expressed in English by verbs using the word “had.”

Result:

The Hebrew of Genesis 1:1 is properly translated as “had created,” the English pluperfect tense. The consequence is that the creation described in Genesis 1:1 is already completed, a “done deal.” See pages 10-13.

Key Issue 2: The Text and Interpretation of Genesis 1:2

The Hebrew words of Genesis 1:2 are also ordered in the sequence that Biblical Hebrew uses to indicate pluperfect action, i.e., expressed in English by verbs using the word “had.”

Result:

The Hebrew of Genesis 1:2 is properly translated as “had existed,” “was existing,” or “was” meaning “was already.” Genesis 1:2 describes the state of planet Earth sometime after the creation of Genesis 1:1 but prior to the start of the sequence of commands modifying the environment. See pages 14-15.

Key Issue 3: When do Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 Happen?

Both Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 are completed before the "And God said. . ." command of Genesis 1:3. The command "And God said. . ." starts the first creative time period. Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 are not included within the first creative time period.

Result:

Genesis 1:1 first describes the creation and then Genesis 1:2 describes the subsequent later condition of planet Earth before the first command of Genesis 1:3. Genesis 1:3 is the first command in a sequence of actions which modify the physical conditions and ecology of planet Earth. See pages 16-17.

Key Issue 4: The “Young Earth” Argument about Genesis 1:1-2

Those advocating an Earth about 6,000 to 10,000 years old propose that Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 are part of the first creative time period which starts with Genesis 1:3.

Answer:

This argument depends on the presence of the word “*in*” in Exodus 20:11. The word “*in*” does not appear in the Hebrew of this verse. The word “*in*” is a word added to the verse by the KJV translators and was italicized to indicate that it had been added. The above argument also depends on an asserted equivalency of the Hebrew words “bara” (create) and “asah” (meaning do, or make). The writer of Genesis uses these two words in Genesis 2:3 in a manner which contradicts the claim of equivalency. See pages 18-19.

Key Issue 5: What About יום “Yom”? What Does יום “Yom” Mean?

Those advocating an Earth about 6,000 to 10,000 years old propose that the Hebrew word יום “yom” refers to a 24-hour day when used in Genesis 1:1-31, and therefore requires a 6,000 to 10,000 year old Earth.

Answer:

This argument fails on many grounds. The word יום “yom” most commonly refers to the daytime. The second most common use of “yom” is to refer to long periods of time. The argument also fails because the universe and planet Earth are already in existence **before** the start of the first creative time period. See Pages 26 - 29 for a more complete discussion of the word “yom.”

Key Issue 1:

The Text and Interpretation of Genesis 1:1

Genesis 1:1 consists of seven Hebrew words. The Hebrew is shown below so that the sequence of the Hebrew words can be verified. Note: Hebrew reads from right to left. An English translation is given below each of the translated Hebrew words, and is also to be read from right to left. The analysis is a simplified version of the treatment in the author's book *Reading Genesis One* which can be consulted for a more detailed analysis. The purpose is to show the uncommon word order of the verse so that the reader may understand the significance by comparison with another well understood verse.

Genesis 1:1

הָאָרֶץ	וְאֵת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	אֵת	אֱלֹהִים	בָּרָא	בְּרֵאשִׁית	Start here.
the Earth	and	the heavens	God (Elohim)	had created	in-beginning	←	

The first word is בְּרֵאשִׁית “in-beginning,” a word that is usually translated “In the beginning.” This word is constructed by adding a prefix ב meaning “in” to the Hebrew word רֵאשִׁית translated “beginning.” The ending letters indicate pronunciation and indicate which words the word “in-beginning” refers to. In this case, the suffix indicates that the word in-beginning refers to the beginning of “the heavens and the Earth.”

בְּרֵאשִׁית = ת + י + רֵאשִׁית + ב

suffix “vowel” word prefix ← A Hebrew word starts here.

The second word is the verb בָּרָא “bara” which means “had created.” The verb בָּרָא “bara” is in the Qal perfect (completed action) form. The Hebrew word “bara” has more than the basic meaning of “create.” “Bara” also carries the concept of making or creating something new. The completed action can be translated “**had created,**” or “**did create.**” If translated “created,” the created must be understood as “created already” to reflect the Hebrew.

The important issue here is the word order which places the Hebrew verb second in the sentence. The most common word order in a biblical Hebrew narrative places the verb first and places the subject of the verb second. Verb first word order appears in 28 of the first 31 verses of Genesis.

Placement of the verb as the second word of a sentence is one of the methods by which biblical Hebrew indicates already completed actions which translate in English as the pluperfect. The pluperfect is the English verb form which uses “had.” The verb second word order is used to give already completed background information at the beginning of a narrative, and for inserting other already completed information into a narrative as a comment or reminder of events which have already occurred.

For the purposes of this brief discussion we will consider and compare the similar construction which occurs in the first verse of Job. Here again, the verb הָיָה is the second word in the sentence. The subject אִישׁ (A man) is the first word. Read from right to left.

Job 1:1								
הָאִישׁ	וְהָיָה	שְׁמוֹ	אִיּוֹב	עוֹז	בְּאֶרֶץ	הָיָה	אִישׁ	← Start here.
the man	and had been	name of	Job	Uz	in land of	had existed	A man	
מֵרָע	וְסָר	אֱלֹהִים	וַיִּירָא	וַיִּשְׁרַר	תָּם	הָהוּא		
from evil	and turning	God	fearing	and upright	perfect	the same		

Job is described as “perfect and upright,” conditions which take considerable time to establish as the character and behavior of a person. Job’s existence in this state is described in my translation under the Hebrew as “had existed.” The completed action verb “had existed” correctly represents a considerable amount of past time, not a condition arrived at in an instant. The narrative of the story of Job begins in Job 1:2, a verse which starts with a verb. The KJV translates Job 1:1 as:

^{KJV} **Job 1:1** There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name *was* Job;
 and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God,
 and eschewed evil.

The translators of the KJV have translated the first verb as “was,” which can be understood correctly in this case as meaning “was already” because of the familiar human context. Young’s Literal Translation (1865) more specifically recognized the already completed action meaning of the verb by translating the verb as “hath been.”

Typically, the KJV translators used the simple English past tense for the completed action Hebrew verbs. They did not recognize, or were unaware of, the pluperfect significance of the biblical Hebrew “verb second” word order. The KJV does not preserve the Hebrew word order. The KJV translation alters the word order to correspond with the subject first practice of English, thereby removing the location (first or second) of the Hebrew verb from the reader's view. This practice has been continued in other later English translations of the Bible.

The important conclusion is that Genesis 1:1 describes already completed background information. Genesis 1:1 presents the creation of the universe and planet Earth as an already completed fact, albeit that the Earth is not in the final condition which we observe today.

English Tense and Hebrew Verb Translation

What are the issues? What is tense?

English speakers use tense every time they speak. It is a natural part of the English language. Since many readers will not have thought about tense since high school, we will first describe tense and then illustrate tense by examples.

Tense, in English, means that the form and placement of verbs tell the reader the “when” of the actions, the sequence of the actions, and sometimes the “duration” of the actions.

Verbs in biblical Hebrew do not tell the reader the “when” and sequence of actions by the form of the verb! Additional factors are involved in determining the English verb used for translation. Not all languages have tenses like English. Chinese is an example of a language which does not use tensed verb forms. This does not mean that Chinese speakers cannot convey the when, sequence, or duration of an action. They can, and do, but that information is not conveyed by the verb form. [Note: Verbs in modern Hebrew, as used in Israel today, do act much like English verbs. Modern Hebrew also has subject first word order.]

English past tense examples: when and sequence

In order to illustrate issues associated with tense in biblical Hebrew translation we shall first consider the two sentences shown below. The example refers to the familiar activity of baking, carried out by the person, Rose, who is the baker.

- (1) Last Friday Rose *baked* cake; Rose *had baked* the bread.
Past (completed) Pluperfect (completed)

In (1) the pluperfect tense “had baked” is used with the simple past tense “baked.” Both “baked” and “had baked” are completed actions. The “had” in this example informs the reader that the bread had been baked and was done (completed) before the cake (also completed). Now consider (2) which uses the simple past tense “baked.”

- (2) Entering the kitchen, Rose *baked* cake. (in process)

The reader sees Rose entering the kitchen and engaging in the process of baking the cake.

English translation of biblical Hebrew usually translates completed action Hebrew verbs using the simple past tense. The effect that practice can have in altering the meaning of the translated text can be illustrated by replacing the *had baked* of line (1) by *baked* yielding sentence (3):

- (3) Last Friday Rose *baked* cake; Rose *baked* the bread.

In sentence (3), the correct order of the actions specified in example (1) has been lost.

What does this mean for translation?

Verbs in biblical Hebrew only indicate that an action is complete (finished) or incomplete (not finished). In biblical Hebrew the verb itself does **not** specify the duration of verbal actions, and it does **not** convey the time ordering of verbal actions. Biblical Hebrew does sometimes indicate the ordering of past actions. It does this not by verb forms but by word order, and several other means. This limitation is very important when reading Genesis.

The meaning of Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2

In the discussion of Genesis 1:1, the verb was translated “had created” to correctly express the completed action meaning of the Hebrew verb, rather than the typical translation “created.”

Why? Because of the word order. Most Hebrew sentences in a continuing narrative (story) start with a verb which is typically translated using the English past tense. As in example (2) using “baked,” an English reader can interpret the completed action as an action occurring in the immediate past, just an instant ago. Such a meaning is not the meaning conveyed by the Hebrew word order in Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.

The pluperfect significance of the “subject before the verb” was known in the 1800s, but a more comprehensive understanding of “verb second” word order use in biblical Hebrew has only been attained within the past forty years. The more comprehensive understanding includes verbs which follow several types of initial words or non-verbal clauses. Because the “when” of the creation in Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 has become a significant issue, the Hebrew verb meaning needs to be expressed with great care.

A particularly clear statement regarding tense translation is quoted below. The quotation is from *A Short Account of the Hebrew Tenses* by R. H. Kennett (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1901, page 1).

The ‘name’ tenses as applied to Hebrew verbs is misleading. The so-called Hebrew ‘tenses’ do not express the time but merely the state of the action. Indeed were it not for the confusion that would arise through the application of the term ‘state’ to both nouns and verbs, ‘states’ would be a far better designation than ‘tenses.’ It must always be born in mind that it is impossible to translate a Hebrew verb into English without employing a limitation (viz. of time) which is entirely absent in Hebrew. The ancient Hebrews never thought of an action as past, present, or future, but simply as perfect, i.e., complete, or imperfect, i.e., as in course of development.

Readers wishing to understand tense translation in greater detail are advised to consult the author’s book *Reading Genesis One*, and the references therein.

Key Issue 2:

The Text and Interpretation of Genesis 1:2

Similarly to Genesis 1:1, it will now be shown that Genesis 1:2 describes the condition of planet Earth as an already completed condition, the condition in which the Earth exists before the “And God said” of Genesis 1:3.

Genesis 1:2 consists of three clauses. We will examine the Hebrew of the first clause because the first clause contains the verb הִיְתָה as the second word of the sentence indicating pluperfect background information.

וְבֹהוּ תְּהוֹ הִיְתָה וְהָאָרֶץ ← **Genesis 1:2**
and “bohu” “tohu” had existed and the Earth Hebrew starts here.

The first word is וְהָאָרֶץ = אָרֶץ “earth” + הַ “the” + וְ “and” or “now.”

The second word is the verb הִיְתָה. This verb means “to be,” “to exist,” “to become,” or “to happen.” The Qal perfect verb הִיְתָה represents a completed action. The word order indicates that the completed action is to be translated “had existed,” “had been,” “existed,” or “was.” Translated “was,” the meaning is equivalent to “was already.” The suffix הַ of הִיְתָה indicates that וְהָאָרֶץ “and the Earth” is the subject of the verb.

The translation under the Hebrew of the last two of the first four words of Genesis 1:2 has been rendered “tohu” “and bohu.” These are phonetic equivalents of the two Hebrew words. The proper translation of these words has posed considerable difficulty for translators, and is extensively discussed in the author’s longer book *Reading Genesis One*. For this simplified treatment we will only consider the KJV translation and Young’s Literal Translation (YLT). These differ in their translation of line (1), and of the two, “waste and void” would be preferred.

- KJV Genesis 1:2**
- (1) And the earth was without form, and void;
 - (2) and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep.
 - (3) And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

- YLT Genesis 1:2**
- (1) the earth hath existed waste and void,
 - (2) and darkness *is* on the face of the deep,
 - (3) and the Spirit of God fluttering on the face of the waters,

In the Hebrew, clauses (2) and (3) do not contain a finite verb, and are termed “verbless clauses.” Their location in time is determined by line (1) to which they refer. The verbs *was* and *is*, appearing in clause (2) of the above translations, are italicized to indicate that they were added by the translator. The verb “moved” in the KJV third clause represents a participle “moving,” which the YLT renders “fluttering.”

The prefix וְ of the first Hebrew word of Genesis 1:2 represents the “and,” which here has a disjunctive effect, indicating a change of scene. The “heavens and the Earth” have been completed. Now, in Genesis 1:2 the scene has changed from the entire universe to “the face of the deep.” The participant has changed from God to “the Spirit of God.” The action also changes from creation (bara) to “moving over face of waters.” Genesis 1:2 is a statement about planet Earth relating the background conditions necessary for understanding the events of Genesis 1:3-4.

We will now consider Genesis 3:1, the first verse in the narrative about Eve and the serpent. Genesis 3:1 is an example that illustrates the pluperfect background meaning of the first clause (1) of Genesis 1:2 and the disjunctive effect of the “And the Earth.” The KJV translation of this verse is given below followed by the Hebrew with the corresponding KJV words.

^{KJV} **Genesis 3:1** Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

הַשָּׂדֶה	חַיֵּית	מִכֹּל	עָרוּם	הָיָה	וְהַנָּחָשׁ	← Genesis 3:1
of the field	beast	than any	more subtil	was	Now the serpent	

The first Hebrew word of Genesis 3:1 is the noun for “serpent” prefixed by וְ a prefix which translates “and” or “now.” The “Now the serpent” acts in the same disjunctive manner as “And the Earth” does in Genesis 1:2. The first clause signals that the previous narrative has ended, the scene is now changed from that of the previous narrative, and some time has passed. The first clause states already completed background information about the serpent. This information is needed for understanding the new narrative which begins with the verb translated “And he said.”

The second Hebrew word הָיָה is the same verb as the second word of Genesis 1:2, but differs in form because it is of masculine gender to refer to the serpent. In the KJV of Genesis 3:1, the already completed meaning of “was” is more apparent due to the following pluperfect “had made.” The disjunctive meaning of the Hebrew prefix וְ is also more apparent because of the translation “Now.” The disjunctive meaning in Genesis 1:2 is recognized in recent translations (such as the NIV) by translating “Now the Earth . . .” Other recent translations, including the NKJ, adopt the “The earth . . .” as used in Young’s Literal Translation shown on page 14.

Important conclusions:

Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 describe already completed background information.

The “And the Earth” in Genesis 1:2 indicates that some time has elapsed since the creation of “the heavens and the Earth” in Genesis 1:1.

Key Issue 3:

When do Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 Happen?

In Genesis 3:1, about Eve and the snake, the first part of the verse gives background information about the serpent and his nature. These facts were already completed and known **before** the snake's initial action, "And he said unto the woman." The sequential narrative of the following events then starts with the Hebrew verb וַיֹּאמֶר "And he said." This same Hebrew verb, "and he said," is also used as the first word of Genesis 1:3, which also starts a sequential narrative.

The parallels of the verb use in Genesis 3:1 and Genesis 1:2-3 demonstrate the following: The "And the Earth was" of the KJV Genesis 1:2 must describe a condition of the Earth already completed and existing **before** the start of the narrative in Genesis 1:3.

The "when" of this completed condition is the same as that described by the translation "had existed," or by the translation "was" when understood as meaning "was already." The Hebrew perfect completed action verb does not indicate how long the Earth had been in this state, when this completed state had been achieved, or how long the Earth continues in this state before the command of Genesis 1:3.

As a consequence, Genesis 1:2 places no restriction on the age of the Earth or on the age of the universe. That Genesis 1:2 places no restriction on the age of the Earth is well-known to those of the Christian community who hold an Old Earth view of Genesis One.

The argument used to ignore the completed action meaning of Genesis 1:2 erroneously asserts that the events of Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 are not background information. This argument will be later examined in detail.

In order to provide a coherent exposition of the meaning of Genesis 1:2 as it relates to the age of the Earth, this study will now present another analysis which shows that Genesis 1:2 is completed before the start of the first creative period. Because this study has not yet investigated the meaning of יום "yom" (commonly translated day), "yom" will be used in referring to the creative periods. The result of the analysis presented here does not depend on the length of time attributed to the creative "yom."

The method of analysis is to follow the pattern of the ending and starting of the six creative periods, working backward from the completion of the sixth period. The completion of the sixth period is recorded in Genesis 2:1 as: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, . . ."

There are two recurring patterns in Genesis 1:1-31. In the KJV these are:

1. Each of the six creative periods (creative "yom") ends with a phrase which starts with:
KJV "**And the evening and the morning were . . .** "

2. Each of the six creative periods (creative “yom”) begins with a sentence which starts with:
KJV “**And God said . . .**”

Analysis Showing Genesis 1:3 is the Start of the First Creative יום “Yom”

Step 1 the end of the sixth “creative yom” is Genesis 1:31

end 1:31 And the evening and the morning were . . . KJV
start 1:24 And God said . . .

Step 2 the end of the fifth “creative yom” is Genesis 1:23

end 1:23 And the evening and the morning were . . . KJV
start 1:20 And God said . . .

Step 3 the end of the fourth “creative yom” is Genesis 1:19

end 1:19 And the evening and the morning were . . . KJV
start 1:14 And God said . . .

Step 4 the end of the third “creative yom” is Genesis 1:13

end 1:13 And the evening and the morning were . . . KJV
start 1:9 And God said . . .

Step 5 the end of the second “creative yom” is Genesis 1:8

end 1:8 And the evening and the morning were . . . KJV
start 1:6 And God said . . .

Step 6 the end of the first “creative yom” is Genesis 1:5

end 1:5 And the evening and the morning were . . . KJV
start 1:3 And God said . . . **This command starts the first creative “yom.”**

By pattern, in every case, the verses before each “And God said . . .” are not included in that creative “yom.”

Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 have taken place, and are completed, before the start of the first creative “yom.” The duration of Genesis 1:1 is not stated, only that the creation has occurred and has been completed. The time interval between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 is not stated. The grammatical existence of this unstated time interval was well-known in the 1800s and early 1900s. There is also an unstated and unknown time interval between Genesis 1:2 and Genesis 1:3.

The significance of these time intervals is that the Bible makes no statement about the age of the universe or the age of planet Earth. As a consequence, the biblical text is consistent with an old universe and an old Earth, both billions of years old.

The Bible does make a statement about a beginning to the universe, a fact which science has grudgingly now accepted, thereby attesting to the truth of the first testable truth statement of the Bible.

Key Issue 4: The “Young Earth” Argument about Genesis 1:1-2

In the previous sections it has been shown that Genesis 1:1-2 places no limit on the age of the Earth or on the age of the universe. Nevertheless, there are people who contest the issue and assert that the Bible says that the Earth and universe are about 6,000 to 10,000 years old. The argument is typically made by quoting the first part of Exodus 20:11 which is shown below.

^{KJV} **Exodus 20:11** For *in* six days (yoms) the LORD made (asah) heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: . . .

The advocate then notes that both heaven and Earth are mentioned and said to have been made “*in* six days.” The “*in*” is interpreted as placing **all** the making of heaven and Earth within the six creative times. Subsequently, it is asserted that the “asah” of Exodus 20:11 includes the “bara” creation of Genesis 1:1. This assertion is based on a claimed full equivalence of “bara” (the word used in Genesis 1:1) and “asah,” making these different Hebrew words interchangeable. **In fact, both of these argumentative steps fail for reasons (1) and (2) as explained below.**

(1) The assertion based on the word “*in*” fails. The word “*in*” does **not** appear in the Hebrew text of Exodus 20:11 (or Exodus 31:17). The word “*in*” is a word added by the KJV translators. The KJV writes the word “*in*” in italics indicating that this word does not exist in the Hebrew text. But, the “*in*” is not italicized in most other English translations or in some recent printings of the KJV. Typically, the reader of Exodus 20:11 is unaware that the “*in*” is **not** in the Hebrew text. The insertion of the word “*in*” into the translation of Exodus 20:11 significantly distorts the meaning. The absence of the “*in*” removes the interpretation that **all** making must take place within the six creative times and voids the asserted inclusion of the “bara” of Genesis 1:1.

^{YLT} **Exodus 20:11** for six days (yoms) hath Jehovah made (asah) the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that {is} in them, . . .

^{KJV} **Exodus 20:11** For *in* six days (yoms) the LORD made (asah) heaven and earth, . . .

Exodus 20:11

הָאָרֶץ	וְאֶת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	אֶת	יְהוָה	עָשָׂה	יָמִים	שֵׁשֶׁת	כִּי	←
the earth	and	the heavens	Yahweh	had made	“yoms”	six	For		
			בָּם	אֲשֶׁר	כָּל	וְאֶת	הַיָּם	אֶת	
			in them	which	all	and	the sea		

Young's Literal Translation (YLT) omits the word “*in*” and translates the verb עָשָׂה “asah” as a completed action by inserting the word “hath” before Jehovah. The accuracy of the YLT is verified by the Hebrew, shown with its literal translation for the portion of the verse in question.¹

Conclusion from (1): The Hebrew of Exodus 20:11 does not support placing the “bara” creation of Genesis 1:1 into the six creative time periods.

(2). The assertion that “bara” (the word used in Genesis 1:1) and “asah” (the word used in Exodus 20:11) are fully equivalent and interchangeable also fails.

Consider Genesis 2:3, a verse which uses both בָּרָא “bara” (create) and עָשָׂה “asah” (made) with respect to the Genesis creation story. The difference in meaning is clear but requires careful explanation of the KJV translation of the Hebrew infinitive לַעֲשׂוֹת “to make” and the KJV margin note. In Genesis 2:3 below, the YLT translation “for making” is correct.

^{YLT} **Gen. 2:3** And God blesseth the seventh day, and sanctifieth it, for in it He hath ceased from all His work which God had prepared (bara) **for making**.

^{KJV} **Gen. 2:3** And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created (bara) and made[†].
[†]Heb. created to make. *(This is a margin note in the 1611 KJV.)*

Genesis 2:3

וַיְבָרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ (1)
 in it because it and sanctified the seventh “yom” God and blessed

שָׁבַת מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת (2)
 “for making” God had created which his work from all he had ceased
 or “to make” (bara)

Line (2) of the Hebrew uses בָּרָא “bara” which is followed by לַעֲשׂוֹת “asah” in an infinitive form translated “for making.” The infinitive also means “to make” as indicated by the KJV margin note. The “to make” indicated by the word לַעֲשׂוֹת “asah” takes place **after** the completed action “had created.” **Not only does the text indicate that “bara” and “asah” have different meanings, but it indicates that the subsequent “makings” followed the creating by intent!**

The translation of לַעֲשׂוֹת (asah) as “for making” or as the “to make” of the KJV margin note is correct for the following reasons: לַעֲשׂוֹת = עָשָׂה + ל is the infinitive עָשָׂה prefixed by the preposition ל which means “for” or “to” and expresses purpose. The preposition ל is not the preposition ו “waw” meaning “and” as it is translated in the KJV. The margin note indicates the KJV translators were aware that the Hebrew differed and was important to note. Only in Genesis 2:3 does the KJV translate לַעֲשׂוֹת “and made.” Elsewhere the KJV translates the לַעֲשׂוֹת differently, examples being “to do” (91 times) and “to make” (21 times).

Conclusion from (2): The writer of Genesis considered the words “bara” and “asah” to be different as indicated by that writer’s use of the two words. These words are not interchangeable in the creation account.

The First 23 Hebrew Words: How Long a Time?

It has been shown that the first two verses of Genesis are completed before the “And God said . . .” of Genesis 1:3. The time information given in Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 leads to a different creation model than that advocated by those holding to a “Young Earth” view. The table below lays out the differences for comparison.

Hebrew Time Sequence of Genesis 1:1-3	“Young Earth” Time Sequence of Genesis 1:1-3
<p> Creation of the heavens and the Earth as in Genesis 1:1 <i>Not instantaneous</i> <i>Time interval</i> Condition of planet Earth, Genesis 1:2 <i>Time interval</i> - - - Start of first creative time - - - “And God said . . .” </p>	<p> - - Start of first creative time - - <i>Instantaneous creation of the universe and planet Earth as in Genesis 1:2</i> “And God said . . .” </p>

The “Young Earth” interpretation is that advocated by Henry Morris. Morris considers the events of Genesis 1:1 to instantaneously take place as the first act of the events of the first creative time. His interpretation intended to explain the fossils as a result of the flood of Noah. The time intervals between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, and between Genesis 1:2 and Genesis 1:3 represent a difficulty for that model.

Those who wrote in “*The Fundamentals*” in the early 1900s accepted an old universe and an old planet Earth.² They accepted the old universe and the time intervals as being consistent with the text of Genesis 1:1-3. Those holding to a “day-age” meaning of the concluding phrases (a commonly held view) placed the fossils within the long time spans of the creative time periods. Those holding to a 24-hour interpretation of the concluding phrases placed the fossils in geologic ages within the time intervals between the verses.

The 1909 and the 1917 Scofield Reference Bibles contained a footnote for Genesis 1:1 which read in part, “The first creative act refers to the dateless past, and gives scope for all the geologic ages.” In this case the “geologic ages” were placed between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. The interval between Genesis 1:2 and Genesis 1:3 had been noted and commented on by G. V. Wigram, in about 1877. Wigram had also noted and commented on the unusual position of the Hebrew verb in the first two verses. Wigram favored placing the “geologic ages” between Genesis 1:2 and Genesis 1:3.³

Not Instantaneous: For Genesis 1:1 to be contained within an assumed 24-hour first creative time period, the word translated “In the beginning” must be taken as representing an extremely short period of time. The planet Earth and the universe are assumed to appear in less than a 12-hour “daytime.” This assumption of an instantaneous appearance of planet Earth and the universe is not supported by the actual uses of the Hebrew word “beginning” in the Bible.

What is the “beginning”? The word **רֵאשִׁית** “beginning” in the Hebrew **does not** refer to something which happens in an instant, like a bolt of lightning. “Beginning” refers to events which take place over a longer time period of unstated length. It is in this sense that the English word “beginning” is to be understood. In English, the word “prologue” would be an apt translation of the word “beginning” as used in Genesis 1:1. Consider the word **בְּרֵאשִׁית** translated “in *the* beginning” used in Jeremiah 28:1.

KJV Jeremiah 28:1

And it came to pass the same year, **בְּרֵאשִׁית** in *the* beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, **in the fourth year, and in the fifth month**, *that* Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which *was* of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD . . .

The events take place four years after Zedekiah starts to rule. The NIV translation recognizes this and translates **בְּרֵאשִׁית** as “. . . early in the reign of . . .”

The word **רֵאשִׁית** “beginning” is also used in Genesis 10:10 and refers to the kingdom of Nimrod. The KJV translation of this verse reads:

KJV Genesis 10:10 And *the* **רֵאשִׁית** “beginning” of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Clearly the “beginning” refers to a considerable amount of time. Time enough to build, or come to rule, four cities. The four cities are said to be the “beginning” of the kingdom of Nimrod. That kingdom amounted to many more cities than the mentioned four. The Bible does not state the length of the life of Nimrod. The lives of those who could be contemporary with Nimrod range from 250 to 450 years. This implies that the “beginning of his kingdom” could easily refer to a time span of 50 to 100 years, or more.

Conclusions:

“In *the* beginning” represents a long period of time and Genesis 1:1 represents a long period of time. Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 1:2 represents a long period of time. All precede the “And God said” of Genesis 1:3.

The Six “Yom”: Times or Days? Why the Fuss?

Times (ages), or days, for all views, the first 23 Hebrew words of the Bible are consistent with an old universe and an old planet Earth. This was known in the early 1900s. Now science has grudgingly verified the first testable truth statement of the Bible. The scientific evidence for a beginning is powerful. That beginning, and the evidences for fine tuning and design, has placed the existence of God back on the table in an agnostic world.

Times (ages), or days, either view does not conflict with the existence of an old universe or an old planet Earth before the start of the first creative time period.

The writers of *The Fundamentals* held both views as to the meaning of “yom” with respect to the six creative times. Why do “Young Earth” advocates insist that planet Earth is only about 10,000 years old?

Why the fuss? The issue was fossils!

It was thought that if Darwinism was to be opposed, the fossils needed to be explained. The fossils and Darwinian evolution invoked vast ages of time as a basic postulate. The implicit assumption was that, given enough time, Darwinian evolution could explain the origin of life. It was, therefore, believed that Darwinian evolution could be effectively opposed by claiming that planet Earth was created no more than about 6,000 to 10,000 years ago.

As scientific evidence of the complexity of life has been discovered, billions of years are insufficient for Darwinian explanations of the origin of life.

The foregoing pages of this booklet have documented biblical objections to the instantaneous creation of planet Earth about 6,000 to 10,000 years ago. Science now views the appearance of the universe as instantaneous, but not 10,000 years ago, and not with the appearance of age, and not in its present state.

The assertion that Darwinian evolution cannot be true because planet Earth is only 10,000 years old (something the Bible does not say) does not convince the unbelieving agnostic. Such a claim does question the truth claims of the Bible. One cannot defend the truth of the Bible by asserting that which the Bible does not say.

What does this Mean for Models of the Creative Times?

If 24-hour days are assumed, does the “Young Earth” automatically result?

NO! The “Young Earth” requires more than 24-hour days. It requires immediate fulfillment of the creative commands and six immediately consecutive ימים “days.” The Hebrew text contains indications not consistent with those assumptions. 24-hour creative days of command can lead to a long time interval between Genesis 1:3 and Genesis 1:31.

If 24-hour days do not automatically yield a “Young Earth,” why the claim?

The rise of the “Young Earth” view to its present prominence began with the 1961 publication of the “Genesis Flood,” one of whose authors (Henry Morris) was a Professor of Hydrology.

The issue was to deny Darwinism by explaining the fossils as a result of the flood of Noah. The creation of the animals and Adam are viewed as very recent. **Any** interpretation which allowed for an old earth, old fossils, **or** a local non-universal flood would not work. Since the instantaneous creation of plants required soil, this also required instantaneous creation of soil with the appearance of age. Functionally, the doctrine of creation with the appearance of age allowed denying **any** physical evidence indicating an old age for the universe or for planet Earth. Morris did allow that the genealogies could not be used to determine the time of the flood or of Adam.

That the genealogies could not be so used to determine the time of the flood or the creation of Adam had been known since 1890. This had been established by the publication of “Primeval Chronology,” in 1890, by Dr. William Henry Green, Professor of Old Testament at the Princeton Theological Seminary. Benjamin B. Warfield, also a professor at the Princeton Theological Seminary, wrote the article, “The Deity of Christ” in *The Fundamentals*. He held an Old Earth view and opposed Darwinism. Warfield stressed the biblical doctrine of the unity of the human race, a fact with which modern DNA analysis concurs. In the 1911 *Princeton Theological Review* he wrote, concerning “Young Earth” interpretation of Genesis: “The Bible does not assign a brief span to human history: this is done only by a particular mode of interpreting the biblical data, which is found on examination to rest on no solid basis.”⁴

On the following pages we will examine Hebrew text which calls into question the “Young Earth” assumptions of immediate completion of the creative commands and the assumption that the creative times are immediately consecutive. Many readers will not be aware that 24-hour creative days do not require a “Young Earth” model.

When are the Commands Fulfilled? What does the Text Say?

The Hebrew consonantal phrase כִּן וַיְהִי appears nine times in the Bible, six of which are in Genesis One. In Genesis this phrase is used to describe the completion of commands. In Genesis One, the KJV translates כִּן וַיְהִי as “and it was so.” The verb וַיְהִי is translated by the KJV “and it came to pass” 320 times. The following word כִּן, is the word usually translated “so.” This phrase does **not** mean that the “so” was achieved immediately. The meaning of the phrase כִּן וַיְהִי can be determined from the three verses, not in Genesis One, which also use the phrase. 2 Kings 15:12 will be considered here as an example.

^{KJV} 2 Kings 15:12

This *was* the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth *generation*. כִּן וַיְהִי And so it came to pass.

The events that the words כִּן וַיְהִי describe in 2 Kings 15:12 do not take place immediately. They take place over an extended period of time, four generations. The Hebrew verb does indicate a completed action, but “when” the action is completed is not indicated by the כִּן וַיְהִי phrase. The other verses are discussed in the book *Reading Genesis One*.

Consequences for the translational issues and time models

Because כִּן וַיְהִי does **not** indicate immediate command completion, it supports and fits well with the view that the creative times are long periods of time. These long periods of time allow for the later completion of the commands.

For an *assumed* 24-hour day, because the completion of the commands does not take place immediately within the “daytime,” a time interval is indicated. This leads naturally to a model where the 24-hour creative “days” are separated by long periods of time. The completion of the commands takes place within a long time interval between the creative “days” of command, between the “morning” and the following “and God said.”

This author does not advocate any 24-hour model. This author considers the creative times to be long periods of time. The foregoing discussion was intended to present information illustrating additional textual problems of the 24-hour model commonly being advocated.

Are there Time Intervals between the Creative “Yom”?

In Hebrew narrative, the time interval between the actions in successive sentences is often not specified. This is an important factor to consider when studying Genesis 1:1-31. Often unnoticed, the time interval between the “. . . and *there* was evening and *there* was morning, one time” of Genesis 1:5 and the following “And God said . . .” of Genesis 1:6 is not stated and is not determinable from the Hebrew text. This time interval cannot be assumed to be zero just because it is not stated.

The existence of such intervals is verified by the example of Genesis 28:10-11 which demonstrates that such intervals cannot be assumed to not exist on the basis of not being stated. Genesis 28:10-11 is about Jacob departing Beersheba to seek a wife from among his relations in Haran.

^{KJV} **Genesis 28:10**

And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.



A time interval of unstated length



^{KJV} **Genesis 28:11**

And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put *them for* his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

It is only later in Genesis 28:19, where the place is identified as Bethel, that the time interval can be estimated. Beersheba to Bethel is a distance of about 60 miles as the crow flies. This distance, given the terrain and travel conditions of the time, would represent a journey of about four days. This estimate is based on the similar journey made by Abraham for the offering of Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19).

For those who wish to interpret the creative “yom” as 24 hours, the time intervals between the six creative time periods are factors which cannot be ignored.

It is important to note that the existence of time intervals between the six creative time periods does not impair the long time (day-age) view or all possible 24-hour day models. It does conflict with the typical “Young Earth” 24-hour day model, where these time intervals have been assumed away without textual evidence.

Key Issue 5:

What about יום “Yom”? What does יום “Yom” Mean?

1. **The most frequent meaning of יום “yom” is daytime.** Upon reflection, this conclusion is to be expected and is not surprising. The Bible most often uses יום “yom” when referring to events which take place in the daytime. Consider the example below using הַיּוֹם the “yom.”

^{KJV} **Genesis 18:1** And the LORD appeared unto him (i.e., Abraham) in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of **the day**;
(הַיּוֹם “the yom” is translated “**the day**.”)

Exodus 34:28, shown below, presents another use. The word יום “yom” is in the singular, meaning “daytime,” but in the KJV יום “yom” becomes “days.” The Hebrew word for night is similarly singular, not the translated “nights.” Exodus 34:28 shows that the singular word יום “yom” did **not** include the night. “Yom” replaces the KJV “days” in the verse below.

^{KJV} Exodus 34:28 So he was there with the LORD forty “**yom**” and forty nights

לַיְלָה	וְאַרְבָּעִים	יּוֹם	אַרְבָּעִים	יְהוָה	עִם	שָׁם	וַיְהִי	Exodus 34:28
night	and forty	yom	forty	Yahweh	with	there	and he had been	←
(KJV “the LORD”)								

Another reference to “forty days and forty nights” occurs in Deuteronomy 9:25 using הַיּוֹם “the yom.” There הַיּוֹם “**the yom**” replaces the KJV “days” in the verse as shown below.

^{KJV} **Deu. 9:25** Thus I fell down before the LORD forty הַיּוֹם “**the yom**” and forty nights as I fell down *at the first*; because the LORD had said he would destroy you.

In Deuteronomy 9:25 both day and night are mentioned. Here הַיּוֹם “the yom” refers to the time of illumination from the sun, about 12 hours. It does not mean 24 hours. If “the yom” included the night it would not be necessary to mention the night explicitly.

Numbers 3:1 refers to the events of Exodus 34:28. Here בַּיּוֹם “**in the day**” includes the entire 40 daytimes and 40 nighttimes, and means a long period of time.

^{KJV} **Numbers 3:1** These also *are the* generations of Aaron and Moses
בַּיּוֹם **in the day** *that* the LORD spake with Moses in Mount Sinai.

The meaning of בַּיּוֹם “**in yom**” does not depend on the prefix ב “in.” For example, consider Abraham’s journey to sacrifice Isaac, where בַּיּוֹם refers to the “daytime.”

^{KJV} **Gen. 22:4** Then בַּיּוֹם **on the third day** Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

2. **The second most frequent use of יום “yom” is to refer to long periods of time.**

Consider Isaiah 23:15 which equated בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא “in yom that” with seventy years:

^{KJV} **Isaiah 23:15**

And it shall come to pass בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא **in that day**, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.

Another example is the well known messianic passage, Isaiah 11:10 shown below:

^{KJV} **Isaiah 11:10**

And בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא **in that day** there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

The translation “time” is consistent with יום “yom” as used to express long time periods in:

יום יְהוָה “**day of the Lord,**” and similar expressions.

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא “**in that day**” (used more than 100 times referring to long periods of time).

עַד-הַיּוֹם “**until this time**” (KJV “unto this day,” used more than 82 times).

3. **The use of יום “yom” to refer to 24 hours is infrequent.** Such use is usually in reference to the sabbath or festivals and ceremonies which include a remembrance of the Exodus. As a remembrance observance, the daytime of the sabbath represents the daytime departure of the Exodus. The night preceding the sabbath daytime corresponds to the night of the Passover. This use is illustrated in the definition of the Day of Atonement, “Yom Kippur,” commanded in Leviticus 23:27 and defined as a sabbath in Leviticus 23:32. The meaning of יום “yom” is best understood by **not** reading the italicized words added by the KJV which do not appear in the Hebrew.

^{KJV} **Lev. 23:27** Also on the tenth *day* of this seventh month *there shall be* יוֹם a **day** of atonement:

^{KJV} **Lev. 23:32** It *shall be* unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth *day* of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

This author’s longer study, ***Reading Genesis One***, contains an extensive analysis of the Hebrew word יום “yom.” That study determined that יום “yom,” as used in Genesis 1:5, is correctly translatable by the English word “time” and that the 24-hour day meaning is unlikely. Readers who wish to understand more about the Hebrew word יום “yom” should consult that book. The table of contents is available at www.creationingenesis.com

Key Issue 5 continued:

Six Times or Six Days? What are the Issues?

The six creative times of Genesis One all end in a patterned phrase. The Hebrew for that phrase, as used in Genesis 1:5, is shown below using the typical English translation for the verbs. The verb וַיְהִי is a completed action in the Hebrew which indicates that the “evening” had occurred or “had been,” and subsequently the morning had occurred. The time between these evenings and mornings is **not** said and is unknown.

(2) אֶחָד יוֹם בֹּקֶר וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי ← Genesis 1:5 line (2)
one time morning “and there was” evening “and there was” NAS, NIV, and RSV

The יוֹם “yom” is translated “time” in agreement with the known frequent use as meaning a long period of time. Time is preferred and avoids the confusing use of the English word “day” with two different meanings. Four verses use יוֹם “yom” in its most frequent meaning of “daytime.” These uses will now be discussed.

Four uses of the word יוֹם “yom” to mean “daytime”

Excluding the six concluding phrases, Genesis 1:1-31 uses the singular יוֹם “yom” (or a singular form of “yom”) four times and a prefixed form of the plural יָמִים “yoms” one time.

^{KJV} **Genesis 1:5** And God called the light יוֹם “yom,” and the darkness He called night.

^{KJV} **Genesis 1:14** Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate הַיּוֹם “the yom” from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, וְלַיָּמִים and for “yoms,” and years:

^{KJV} **Genesis 1:16** And God had made the two great lights, the greater light to govern הַיּוֹם “the yom” and the lesser light to govern the night; . . .”

^{KJV} **Genesis 1:18** And to rule בַּיּוֹם over the “yom” and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: (Here the KJV translates בַּיּוֹם “in yom” as “over the day.”)

The three singular forms used in these verses all refer to the time of illumination by the sun, the daytime. **Because the meaning is the same in all verses, these verses show that prefixing by ב “in” or by ה “the” does not determine the meaning of יוֹם “yom.”** The Hebrew word יוֹם “yom” appears alone and in prefixed forms. It appears as יוֹם 241 times in the Bible. יוֹם “yom” is used with prefixes more than another 1,000 times.

The next use of יום “yom” is בַּיּוֹם in Genesis 2:4.

Genesis 2:4 These *are the* generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, בַּיּוֹם in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

Here בַּיּוֹם “in yom” refers to all the preceding six “yom,” a long period of time, not 24 hours, **and does so refer, no matter what English word is used in the translation.**

The numbering of the creative “yom”

The numbering pattern of “yom one,” and subsequently יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי, יוֹם שְׁנִי, etc., is used only in Genesis One. In other numberings of the word יוֹם “yom,” biblical Hebrew almost always does two things which are **not** done in the numbering of the creative “yom.” It prefixes each number by ה (the prefix meaning “the”) and attaches a prefix to the word יוֹם “yom.” In Genesis One, the first five creative “yom” are numbered without prefixing ה to the numbers. For example, Genesis 1:8 uses שְׁנִי and not הַשְּׁנִי “the second” as used in other numberings. The KJV translation added “the” to all the numbers of the first five “yom” but did not italicize “the,” making the absence of ה not apparent to the reader. Similarly, the absence of a prefix, as used with יוֹם “yom” when numbered elsewhere in the Bible, is not apparent to a reader of English translation. Consequently, some will now claim that the phrases having יוֹם “yom” followed by a number must be 24-hour days, not knowing that the words translated “the second day” of Genesis 1:8 should properly be translated “a second day,” and similarly for the first five “yom.”⁵ As a result, arguments for 24-hour days based on claims referring to the numbering in other verses of the Bible are faulty. The pattern used to conclude the first five creative times is:

- a. Evening occurs (a completed action), i.e., and there was evening.
- b. Morning occurs (a completed action), i.e., and there was morning.
- c. יוֹם “yom” followed by a non-prefixed number ends the concluding phrase.

The use of יוֹם “yom” with a following non-prefixed number for numbering a sequence is unique to Genesis 1:1-31. Contrary to some claims, there are no other applicable examples.

What does this mean for models of the creative times?

The evidence presented has shown that it is unlikely that the creative “yom” are 24-hour days.

If 24-hour days are assumed, does the “Young Earth” model automatically result?

NO! The advocates of the “Young Earth” model have based their model on more than 24-hour days. They claim immediate fulfillment of the creative commands and six immediately consecutive יוֹם “days.” The next pages will examine these and other issues.

After the Creation: What Models of the Six Creative Time Periods are Consistent with the Hebrew?

The “**Long Creative Times**” model of the six creative time periods is, in this author’s opinion, the preferred reading of the Hebrew text. However, there will be readers of this brief booklet who will still wish to consider possible 24-hour day type alternatives. Because of this, a comparison of possible models is presented in the following table and discussion.

Are any models which assume a 24-hour day possibly consistent with the Hebrew?

Yes. But such models differ from the 24-hour day model commonly advocated today. The table below illustrates features required of such models if they are to be consistent with the Hebrew text. Textual evidence for the time intervals follows on the next page.

THE LONG CREATIVE TIMES MODEL (The model preferred by this author)	THE 24-HOUR “CREATIVE DAY” MODEL AND TIME INTERVALS POSSIBLY CONSISTENT WITH THE HEBREW TEXT
The creation of the heavens and the Earth in Genesis 1:1, the time intervals, and Genesis 1:2. A long period of time, billions of years.	The creation of the heavens and the Earth in Genesis 1:1, the time intervals, and Genesis 1:2. A long period of time, billions of years.
Creative Time One (a Long Time) Command completion within the long creative time	Creative “day” One (24-hours) Time Interval Command completion between “days” of command
Creative Time Two	Creative “day” Two (24-hours)

The above 24-hour day model differs from the usual “Young Earth” model. In the usual “Young Earth” model the time intervals have been assumed away. With their inclusion, one naturally obtains a 24-hour day model of “days of command” separated by intervals of time providing for command completion.

Is there Additional Evidence for long Time Periods?

Yes. The events described in Genesis 1:24-31 and Genesis 2:5-25 describe the activities of God, Adam, and Eve during the sixth creative “time.” With “yom” translated “time” the events can be understood as occurring in an amount of time reflecting the usual meanings of the words. It is not necessary to “speed up” the performance rate of the events described in Genesis 1:24-31 and Genesis 2:5-25.

In brief, the events during the sixth creative “time” include:

1. God commands and the ground brings forth cattle.
2. God creates (“bara”) Adam.
3. God plants a garden.
4. Trees grow to sufficient maturity to bear fruit.
(This requires at least a growing season, but often many seasons may pass before fruit is borne.)
5. Adam is given permission to eat from most of the trees.
6. Adam names the animals which are brought to him.
7. Adam sleeps and God removes tissue (KJV “rib”) from Adam’s side.
8. Eve is formed (cloned?) from the tissue (KJV “rib”) and brought to Adam.

All the above suggest the passage of a considerable period of time. These are not the events of one “daytime”! The time of the growing season for the production of fruit is at least several months. This sense of time is contained in the ordinary meaning of the words and applies to all the actions, conveying a sense of the passage of considerable time. Genesis 2:15 indicates that Adam had performed gardening duties of some sort for a considerable period of time.

KJV Genesis 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

Those advocating a 24-hour creative time period often assert that the time between Genesis 1:3 and Genesis 1:31 is 144 hours (6 days x 24 hours). Because of this, they are forced into the absurd position of requiring all of the above events to take place at “warp speed.” Everything listed above for creative “yom” six would take place in about 12 hours! This would also be required for the events of the other creative “yom.” There is no indication in the biblical Hebrew of these sections that the events were accomplished at an unusual rate. The translation “time” in the concluding phrases allows these sections to be understood more normally, consistent with the manner in which they were written.

Recall: The age of planet Earth and the age of the universe are not determined by the time length attributed to the six creative times.

Summary: This brief study of Genesis One has shown that :

Genesis 1:1 describes already completed background information. Genesis 1:1 presents the creation of the universe and planet Earth as an already completed fact, albeit that the Earth is not in the final condition which we observe today.

“In *the* beginning” represents a long period of time and Genesis 1:1 represents a long period of time. Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 1:2 represents a long period of time.

Genesis 1:2 also describes already completed background information. The “And the Earth” in Genesis 1:2 indicates that some time has elapsed since the creation of “the heavens and the Earth” in Genesis 1:1.

The command “And God said . . .” of Genesis 1:3 starts the first creative “yom.” Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 are completed before the start of the first creative time period. There is also a time interval of unstated and unknown length between Genesis 1:2 and Genesis 1:3.

The significance of the time intervals is that the Bible makes no statement about the age of the universe or the age of planet Earth. As a consequence, the biblical text is consistent with an old universe and an old Earth, both billions of years old. This result is found for any view of the time length of the creative “yom.”

The Bible does make a statement about a beginning to the universe, a fact which science has grudgingly now accepted, thereby attesting to the truth of the first testable truth statement of the Bible.

Things Genesis One Does and Does Not Say (a partial list):

Genesis One **does** say that there was a beginning to the universe and planet Earth.

Genesis One **does** say that God created the heavens and the Earth.

Genesis One **does** say that planet Earth was not always as it is now; changes have occurred.

Genesis One **does** say that God acted to bring the present condition of the Earth into being.

Genesis One does **not** specify an age for the Earth or an age for the universe.

Genesis One does **not** say that the creative times (yom) are 24 hours in duration.

Genesis One does **not** say that the creative times (yom) followed immediately one after another.

Genesis One does **not** say that the commands were fulfilled immediately, like a bolt of lightning.

These conclusions are not new. They were well known in the early 1900s. At the present time there is among evangelical Christians a degree of confusion about Genesis One. The confusion has arisen from the advocacy of a “Young Earth” reading of Genesis One. This advocacy has come to prominence mainly within the past 40 years. It is the opinion of this author that this rise to prominence has been aided by the Darwinists themselves. The opposition to Darwinism by the “Young Earth” advocates serves the Darwinists because it avoids the need to mount a scientific defense of Darwinism. Instead, the Darwinist can attack the claims and assertions of the “Young Earth” advocates, assertions which are not in accord with the Hebrew of Genesis One. The Bible cannot be effectively defended nor can the Gospel be effectively proclaimed by asserting things which the Bible does not say.

This confusion has now reached the point where *some* people think that those who wrote in *The Fundamentals* were Young Earth believers. Not so! They did not hold “Young Earth” views; they accepted an Old Earth view. With respect to Darwinism, they did not view the Old Earth as the issue; they recognized that the essence of Darwinism was a denial of design and thereby a denial of a creator God.

Four of the writers of *The Fundamentals*, C. I. Scofield, Benjamin B. Warfield, James Orr, and R. A. Torrey (a noted evangelist) were well known for their acceptance of an Old Earth. These writers and others opposed Darwinism on the basis of theology and presented arguments citing evidence of design. Today it is the implicit evidence of design in the complex structure of life that is the basis of a very effective opposition to Darwinism. These arguments speak to the scientific evidence. Argument from design has confronted advocates of Darwinism with scientific evidence which does not support the claims of Darwinism.

Books like *Darwin's Black Box*⁶ and *Darwin on Trial*⁷ have altered the terms of the confrontation with Darwinism.

The message of Genesis One is primarily theological. It informs the descendants of Adam (mankind) about their origin and about their relationship to their Creator. The message is that God is the Creator of Adam (mankind) and that mankind has a responsibility toward God and is accountable to God. The modern attacks on Genesis One have, as their basis, a wish to discredit this theological message and to assert freedom from accountability.

Theological Content

Some of the theological content of Genesis One escapes our attention today because the sun and moon are not presently viewed as gods. At the time of Moses, Genesis One expressed powerful theological contradictions to the religions of Egypt, Canaan, and Babylon. Some of these contradictions are:

- One creator God, not many gods.
- The sun and moon are created objects, not gods.
- The animals are created and are not gods.

The Egyptians worshiped many creatures. Because the theological message that the sun and moon are not gods is not significant in our time, it is possible to mistake Genesis One as being a description of the physical and biological history of planet Earth. Genesis One does make statements about the physical and biological development, but does so as a subsidiary to the theological message against the pagan gods worshiped at the time of Moses. The statements are true, but the statements are an incomplete description of the events that transpired.

At the present time, the opposition to the theological message of Genesis One is opposition to a Creator God who acts in history and in time. The tactic is to interpret the “when” and the “creative acts” in a way that introduces conflict between the interpretation and the observable geological record. The Darwinist typically assumes a God that does not act in history or geologic time, or assumes there is no God at all. The Bible reveals a God who **does** act in history and in geologic time.

END NOTES:

1. In other verses the KJV does not insert “in” into the translation of כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת “for six.”

This is shown in the example of 1 Kings 11:16. Only the first six Hebrew words are shown below.

^{KJV} 1 Kings 11:16 (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel,
until he had cut off every male in Edom:)

יֹאבָב	שָׁם	יָשַׁב	חֳדָשִׁים	שֵׁשֶׁת	כִּי	1 Kings 11:16
Joab	there	did remain	months	six	For	←

The preposition כִּי “in” does appear in the Hebrew of other verses. This shows that the word “in” is not to be inserted into a translation unless the preposition כִּי actually appears in the Hebrew.

The following example of Genesis 10:25 illustrates this point. In this case the final ם of the word בְּיָמָיו represents the pronoun “his,” יָמָיו is the plural “yoms,” and בְּ is the prefix “in.”

^{KJV} Genesis 10:25 (1) And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* Peleg;
(2) **for in his days** was the earth divided; and his brother’s name *was* Joktan.

הָאָרֶץ	נִפְלְגָה	בְּיָמָיו	כִּי	(2)	Genesis 10:25
the land	was divided	in days his	for		←

2. *The Fundamentals*, R. A. Torrey, A. C. Dixon and Others Ed.; 4 volume set, 1917, reprinted 1988 by Baker House Co. ISBN 0-9010-8809-7.
3. G. V. Wigram, Examination of the Hebrew Bible as to the Structure and Idiom of the Language, in *Memorials of the Ministry of G. V. Wigram*, Vol. 2, 1876-1877.
4. Benjamin B. Warfield, “On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race,” *Princeton Theological Review*, Volume ix, 1911, pp. 1-25. Also in *Biblical and Theological Studies*, reprinted 1968.
5. Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, pp. 61-62, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Regency Reference Library Zondervan Publishing House, 1982).
6. Michael J. Behe, *Darwins Black Box* (New York, New York: Free Press, 1996).
7. Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin On Trial* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1991).

Readers Notes:

GENESIS ONE and the Age of the Earth

**A brief explanation of the Hebrew text of the first chapter
of Genesis as it relates to the age of the Earth question**

**Rodney Whitefield, a Ph.D. physicist, is also the author of *READING GENESIS ONE:
Comparing Biblical Hebrew with English Translation.***

More information is available at website creationingenesis.com