

# The word וַיְהִי "vayhiy" in Genesis Chapter One

## Support for an Old Earth

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The creative time periods in Genesis chapter one have been the subject of much discussion. Most of the controversy has focused on the Hebrew word יוֹם "yom" translated "day," and the following numbers. The word יוֹם "day" and the numbers which follow, occur as part of a concluding phrase that appears six times. The Hebrew of Genesis 1:13 is shown below as an example:

יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי      בֹקֶר      וַיְהִי      עֶרֶב      וַיְהִי      ← Genesis 1:13  
third    day            morning    and there was    evening    and there was    Hebrew starts here.

Modern English translations translate the first four Hebrew words of the concluding phrase as "and there was evening and there was morning." The word וַיְהִי "vayhiy" is translated "and there was." (וַיְהִי sounds like "va-yehee.") My intent is to show that the controversy about the meaning of the Hebrew word יוֹם "yom" in Genesis chapter one can be partially resolved by considering how the word וַיְהִי "vayhiy" acts with respect to time reference in the concluding phrases. The concluding phrases appear in Genesis chapter one six times and nowhere else in the Bible. The un-prefixed words עֶרֶב "evening" and בֹקֶר "morning" appear immediately following וַיְהִי only in these phrases.<sup>1</sup> The first four Hebrew words shown above in the example of Genesis 1:13 also appear as the first four words of Genesis 1:19 and Genesis 1:23.

How we will proceed, a "road map" to the paper:

1. Pages 2 through 3 give an overall introduction about the word וַיְהִי "vayhiy." That introduction is followed by detailed explanation of the temporal effect of the וַיְהִי "vayhiy" in Job 2:1.
2. Page 4 examines examples that demonstrate and explain the temporal effects of וַיְהִי "vayhiy" used two times in one verse. The concluding phrases of Genesis chapter one use וַיְהִי "vayhiy" two times.
3. Pages 5 through 6 present a figure that visually shows where the temporal effects of וַיְהִי "vayhiy" appear in Genesis 1:11-13. This section gives a detailed explanation of the phrase כֵּן וַיְהִי "and it was so," using the example of 2 Kings 15:12 and statements by known experts on biblical Hebrew.
4. Pages 6 through 8 explain how the temporal effects of וַיְהִי "vayhiy" relate to Genesis chapter one and the meaning of the word יוֹם "yom." This section finds that the temporal effect of וַיְהִי supports the long time meaning of the Hebrew word יוֹם "yom," i.e., the day-age view.
5. Page 9 considers the question: What about Genesis 1:11-13 and the 24-hour day interpretation?

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<sup>1</sup> עֶרֶב "sounds like "e-rev." בֹקֶר sounds like "vo-ker." יוֹם sounds like "yome," rhymes with "dome."

## A discussion of the Hebrew word וַיְהִי vayhiy

Our first step will be to discuss the use and meaning of וַיְהִי "vayhiy" at the start of a sentence. וַיְהִי is a wayyiqtol verb, a prefixed Hebrew verb form that is used in narrative to indicate continuance of a story. The prefix ו is commonly translated "and."

As the first verb in a sentence in a continuing story (narrative) וַיְהִי performs a temporal function; it moves the story forward in time and introduces a new reference time for the events thereafter described. In many cases, a number of words follow the initial וַיְהִי and describe the setting in which the following events take place. These following words usually provide information that defines the new reference time. In performing this function, וַיְהִי does not fully lose the imperfect meaning of the "coming into being" of what follows, but rather expresses that as part of the shift in time. The King James Version (KJV) often translates וַיְהִי "And it came to pass," clearly expressing this function.

English has other ways of indicating a shift in time. Because English narrative is mostly written using the simple past tense, the verb used will typically be a past tense verb. Modern English translators prefer to indicate and quantify the shift in time by the way they translate the qualifying words or phrases that follow the Hebrew word וַיְהִי .

In the concluding phrases of Genesis chapter one, the first וַיְהִי is followed by the word עֶרֶב "evening," and that word is immediately followed by another וַיְהִי followed by the word בֹּקֶר "morning." We will find that the second וַיְהִי also indicates a shift in time. And we will carefully examine the function of וַיְהִי in similar Hebrew usage to determine the correct temporal meaning for translation. Because the phrase we are studying is unique to Genesis chapter one, our investigation will proceed in steps, considering verses that are analogous in part.

### Examples - analogous in part:

First we will examine Job 2:1 where the noun is הַיּוֹם "the day." The prefix ה meaning "the" makes the word יוֹם "day" definite, referring to a specific day. The Hebrew nouns עֶרֶב "evening" בֹּקֶר "morning" and הַיּוֹם "the day" all express temporal meaning, but the Hebrew nouns "evening" and "morning" are indefinite due to the absence of the Hebrew prefix ה meaning "the." The word עֶרֶב translates as "an evening," as in one of many, and בֹּקֶר translates as "a morning." Job 2:1 takes place immediately after Job has learned of the demise of all his children and loss of all his possessions. The KJV translation, starting with Job 1:21 reads:

<sup>KJV</sup> Job 1:21-22 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.  
<sup>22</sup> In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Immediately following Job 1:22 we have:

<sup>KJV</sup> Job 2:1 **Again there was a day** when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

עַל־יְהוָה    לְהִתְיַצֵּב    הָאֱלֹהִים    בְּנֵי    וַיָּבֹאוּ    הַיּוֹם    וַיְהִי    Job 2:1  
before the Lord    to present themselves    God    sons of    when came    a day    Again there was    ← Hebrew starts here.

The KJV translated the Hebrew word הַיּוֹם "the day" as "a day" making "the day" an indefinite day, and translated וַיְהִי "Again there was" indicating the passage of an indefinite and unknown amount of time.

For comparison, the KJV translates **וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם**, the same two Hebrew words, in other verses as:

<sup>KJV</sup> Job 1:6 Now there was a day . . .  
<sup>KJV</sup> Job 1:13 And there was a day . . .  
<sup>KJV</sup> 1 Samuel 14:1 Now it came to pass upon a day . . .

In these other verses we find that the **וַיְהִי** has been translated to indicate the passage of an indefinite amount of time, and a definite noun **הַיּוֹם** "the day" has been translated as an indefinite "a day." The indefinite translation "a day" aids in indicating the passage of time. The KJV use of the word "was" does not alter the indication of the passage of an undefined and indefinite amount of time.

In the Hebrew of Job 2:1 "the day" is made definite by the prefix "the," and the nature of that "the day" is defined by the wayyiqtol verbal clause that follows. The KJV translation, ". . . when the sons of God came . . ." functions to make the word "day" definite, even though the KJV translation was "a day," a translation that aided in expressing that some amount of time had passed. A different translation, "And there came to pass **the day** the sons of God came to present themselves . . .," would have expressed the presence of a time interval and retained the definite Hebrew word "the day." The translation "Now it came to pass upon a day" illustrates the common KJV practice of translating **וַיְהִי** "and it came to pass," a translation that the KJV makes about 320 times out of 816 occurrences. We have now found that **וַיְהִי עָרַב** can be correctly translated as:

**"and there came to pass an evening,"**  
**or "and there came an evening,"**  
**or "and there was an evening."**

The common modern translation "and there was evening" obscures the indefiniteness of the Hebrew noun **עָרַב** "an evening." As a consequence, the presence of the shift in time indicated by the use of **וַיְהִי** at the beginning of sentences and temporal expressions is also obscured.

In Genesis 1:13, the second **וַיְהִי** verb does not introduce an explanatory phrase; it introduces another temporal expression **בִּקְרַב וַיְהִי** as shown below:

<b>יּוֹם</b> third	<b>שְׁלִישִׁי</b> day	<b>בִּקְרַב</b> a morning	<b>וַיְהִי</b> and there was	<b>עָרַב</b> an evening	<b>וַיְהִי</b> and there was	← <b>Genesis 1:13</b> Hebrew starts here.
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Our problem is how to interpret **וַיְהִי בִּקְרַב**. Traditionally, **וַיְהִי בִּקְרַב** has been considered an independent verbal clause. The LXX (Septuagint) translation at about 250 B.C. had translated:

Genesis 1:13 **καὶ ἐγένετο ἑσπέρα καὶ ἐγένετο πρωὶ ἡμέρα τρίτη**  
 And became evening and became morning daytime third

The Greek verb **ἐγένετο** has the meanings: "become, be; happen, take place, arise (aor. often impers. it happened or came about); and come into being."<sup>2</sup> This gives evidence that, long ago, Greek translators of the Bible recognized that **וַיְהִי** inserted a time interval into narrative."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> UBS dictionary.

<sup>3</sup> The LXX translation **ἐγένετο** later played a role in the proposal to translate the **הָיָה** in Genesis 1:2 as "became." Recognizing that the wayyiqtol **וַיְהִי** was often translated "became," some interpreters improperly associated the "became" meaning with the Hebrew root **הָיָה**, ignoring or being unaware of the specialized function of the **וַיְהִי** in Hebrew narrative of the Bible.

## Two sequential וַיְהִי clauses: the temporal effect

To investigate the case of two sequential וַיְהִי clauses we will consider Ruth 1:1 where the second וַיְהִי is followed by רָעַב , a noun meaning "famine." And to prepare for Ruth 1:1 we will first look at Genesis 26:1 where the same word רָעַב "famine" follows the word וַיְהִי that begins the sentence, an arrangement like that in Job 2:1 which we discussed earlier.

Genesis 26:1 follows immediately after the final verse of the story of Esau selling his birthright to Jacob, and the KJV translates as follows:

<sup>KJV</sup> Genesis 26:1 And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.

וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ מִלְּבַד הָרָעַב הָרִאשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר הָיָה בְּיַמֵּי אַבְרָהָם Genesis 26:1  
 Abraham in days of was that the first the famine besides in land a famine And there was ← Start here.

The second Hebrew word רָעַב "famine" is indefinite, specifying that the "famine" was one of several. The KJV translation "and there was" indicates the existence of the famine. And by context we find that the first word וַיְהִי has introduced an unspecified shift of the narrative, forward in time, to some as yet undefined time after the sale of the birthright. The writer removed the ambiguity by specifically adding "besides the first famine in the days of Abraham." The וַיְהִי has also retained the meaning of the famine coming into being, something we understand from the intermittent nature of the occurrence of famine.

Ruth 1:1 starts with a וַיְהִי followed by a temporal clause containing the infinitive "ruling" and specifies a time having long duration, that of the "ruling of the judges."

<sup>KJV</sup> Ruth 1:1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

**Ruth 1:1**  
 ← וַיְהִי בְּיַמֵּי שְׁפַט הַשְּׂפֹטִים וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה  
 Judah from Bethlehem a man and went in land famine there was the judges ruling of in days of Now it came to pass

The first Hebrew וַיְהִי is translated "Now it came to pass," indicating that the following temporal phrase defines a reference time for the start of the story. The second וַיְהִי, followed by רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ "a famine in the land," shifts the reference time to a specific part of the "days when the judges ruled." The KJV translation "there was" denotes the existence of this narrowed time specification for the following narrative, and the second clause, as a whole, expresses the וַיְהִי function of indicating a shift in reference time.

**We have found that both the first and second וַיְהִי act to shift to a new reference time.**

Based on the above analysis we have now found the first four words of Genesis 1:13, Genesis 1:19, and Genesis 1:23 can be translated as:

"And there **came to pass** an evening, and there **came to pass** a morning, . . ."  
 or "And there came an evening, and there came a morning, . . ."  
 or "And there was an evening, and there was a morning, . . . ."

In these translations, for both וַיְהִי clauses, there is an indefinite amount of time specified for the forward time shift to a new reference time. All the above translations express the indefinite meanings of עָרַב "evening" and בֹּקֶר "morning" as being one of many.

## וַיְהִי כֵן "And it was so" and the time of action of the events of Genesis 1:12

The preceding has shown that וַיְהִי introduces a time shift for the event or explanatory clause that follows immediately after the וַיְהִי . The phrase וַיְהִי כֵן "and it was so" of Genesis 1:11 also introduces an **unknown** amount of time between the time of the command and the time of the command's completion. The events of Genesis 1:12 take place prior to the time of the "and it was so," even though Genesis 1:12 is written following the וַיְהִי כֵן "and it was so" of Genesis 1:11. Recognition of this manner of writing in biblical Hebrew is **not new**; it had been explicitly pointed out by S. R. Driver in 1874.<sup>4</sup> The time sequence we will establish for when Genesis 1:12 takes place is illustrated below. Time interval #1 corresponds to the time shift introduced by the וַיְהִי כֵן "and it was so." At present we will only be concerned with the effect of וַיְהִי כֵן "and it was so" and the time location of the events of Genesis 1:12.

<sup>KJV</sup> Genesis 1:11-12

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth:

↑ Time interval #1 wherein Genesis 1:12 happens even though written following "and it was so."

וַיְהִי כֵן

and it was so.

{ Temporal shift adding information, i.e., "particulars" }

Time interval # 2

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: **and God saw that it was good.**

<sup>modified</sup> Genesis 1:13 And there was **an evening**, and there was **a morning**, יום "a day" third.

Time interval #3

Genesis 1:11- 12 consists of "two parts closely connected," i.e., the command in Genesis 1:11 and the affirmation of completion in Genesis 1:12. Driver's (1874) *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew and Some Other Syntactical Questions* describes such situations. Driver says in section 75:

75. But the chronological sequence, though the most usual, is not the sole principle by which the use of ו is regulated. Where, for example, a transaction consists of two parts closely connected, a Hebrew narrator will often state the principal first, appending the concomitant occurrence with the help of ו ; or again, in describing a series of transactions, **he will hasten at once to state briefly the issue of the whole**, and afterwards, as though forgetting that he had anticipated, proceed to annex the particulars **by the same means**: in neither of these cases is it implied that the event introduced by the ו is subsequent to that denoted by the previous verb:...

Application of the above quotation requires identifying the words and phrases which correspond with the descriptions used by Driver. For Genesis 1:11-12 the correspondences are:

1. The "previous verb" is the verb וַיְהִי "and it was" in the phrase "and it was so."
2. "The issue of the whole" is Genesis 1:11 telling of the commands and their completion.
3. The commands and their completion are "the series of transactions."
4. The "annexed particulars" corresponds to Genesis 1:12. "By the same means" refers to the use of the verb forms that are used in continuing a story, i.e., a "wayyiqtol".

In accordance with Driver's statement, Genesis 1:12 (the annexed particulars) is not subsequent to "and it was so." This quote from Driver supports the interpretation of this study - that the events of Genesis 1:12 took place **before** the "and it was so," i.e., in time interval #1 above.

Time intervals #2 and #3 appear as per the discussion of וַיְהִי on pages 2 through 4. #2 is inserted by the וַיְהִי עָרַב "And there was **an evening**." #3 is inserted by the וַיְהִי בֹקֶר "And there was **a morning**."

<sup>4</sup> S. R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of Tenses in Hebrew and Some Other Syntactical Questions*, (Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1998) first pub 1874, page 81, section 75.

Since Driver's (1874) publication there has been continuing study of the verbal patterns of the Hebrew Old Testament. Current scholarship calls the adding of explanatory detail, signaled by partial repetition, "temporal overlay." The term "temporal overlay" applied to Genesis 1:11-12 means the shift to a past time location such as we have illustrated for the confirmatory events of Genesis 1:12.

Randall Buth addressed the identification of "temporal overlay" in 1993, and supported by examples in Judges, concluded: <sup>5</sup>

*"As we look at examples of this phenomena, we will notice two different ways in which the temporal overlay can be signaled outside of the grammar. One method is through lexical reference and/or repetition; the other method is based on culturally natural semantic relationships with the previous sentence." Buth additionally states: "Not every word need be repeated in order to provide a lexical signal to a grammatically unmarked temporal overlay."*

Genesis 1:11-12 is an example of "temporal overlay." Genesis 1:12 repeats much of Genesis 1:11 using the same words, in the same order, and then replaces the final two Hebrew words **וַיְהִי כֵן** with a different phrase **וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב** "and God saw *it was* good." "And God saw *it was* good" is new information and ends the shift to the earlier time in the narrative. The forward progression of the narrative resumes with the **וַיְהִי עֶרֶב** "and there was an evening" of Genesis 1:13, which indicates a shift in time to an unspecified and indeterminate "a morning" - one of many.

Now we will inquire about the time shift introduced by the **וַיְהִי כֵן** "and it was so."

The unmarked consonantal phrase **וַיְהִי כֵן** appears nine times in the Bible, six of which are in Genesis chapter one. <sup>6</sup> That the phrase **וַיְהִי כֵן** inserts a time shift can be determined from the three verses which use this phrase and are not in Genesis chapter one. 2 Kings 15:12 will be considered here as an example. <sup>7</sup>

<sup>KJV</sup> **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*. **וַיְהִי כֵן** **And so it came to pass.**

The events that the words **וַיְהִי כֵן** describe in 2 Kings 15:12 did **not take place immediately**. They took place over the time of four generations. Applying this to Genesis 1:11-12, we find that **וַיְהִי כֵן** introduces time interval #1 which can be very long, much longer than a daytime or 24 hours. A long time interval is in accord with the time it takes for fruit trees to grow and bear fruit.

### **How the temporal effects of **וַיְהִי כֵן** "vayhiy" relate to Genesis chapter one and the meaning of "Yom"**

The writer of 2 Kings is telling of historical events. From the perspective of the writer of 2 Kings, all the historical events that he relates are **past** events. He can "flash forward" and provide affirmation of the fulfillment of prophetically predicted outcomes. The Hebrew verb **וַיְהִי כֵן** does indicate a completed action, but the action was completed long after the time of the statements in 2 Kings 15:12.

Genesis chapter one is also telling of historical events. To the writer of Genesis chapter one, all the events that he relates are **past** events. The writer of Genesis 1:11 can also "flash forward" in time and affirm the completion of the commands. The **וַיְהִי כֵן** of "**and it was so**" signals the shift to the time of the completion, i.e., a time when "**it was so**." Because **וַיְהִי כֵן** does **not** indicate **immediate** command completion, it fits well with the view that the creative times are long periods of time. For Genesis 1:11-13, there would be a time interval between the **וַיְהִי כֵן** of Genesis 1:12 and the "and there was an evening" of Genesis 1:13.

<sup>5</sup> Randall Buth, Methodological Collision Between Source Criticism and Discourse Analysis: The Problem of the "Unmarked Temporal Overlay" and the Pluperfect *wayyiqtol*, Robert D. Bergen, editor, in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics in Summer Institute of Linguistics* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1994) page 138.

<sup>6</sup> The original text was not marked for vowels. The vowel markings were added in the middle ages after 600 A.D.

<sup>7</sup> The other verses are Amos 5:14 (vowel marked differently) and translated as a certain future result. And Judges 6:37-38, where the completion takes place on the day following a request, not an immediate completion.

This is shown again with וַיְהִי כֵן more appropriately translated "and so it came to pass."

<sup>KJV</sup> Genesis 1:11-12

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth:

↑ Time interval #1 wherein Genesis 1:12 happens even though written following "and it was so."

וַיְהִי כֵן and so it came to pass. { Temporal shift adding information, i.e., "particulars" }

Time interval # 2

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: **and God saw that it was good.**

<sup>modified</sup> Genesis 1:13 And there was **an evening**, and there was **a morning**, יום "a day" third.

↑ Time interval #3 ↑

Genesis 1:12, a statement affirming the completion of the command in Genesis 1:11, does not contain a וַיְהִי indicating a shift in time reference. The verbs "and brought forth" and "and saw" are of the form used in continuing a story, but וַיְהִי כֵן places the events of Genesis 1:12 within time interval #1. This placement would have been more apparent if וַיְהִי כֵן had been translated "and so it came to pass"- as in 2 Kings 15:12. The example of 2 Kings 15:12 shows that וַיְהִי כֵן does **not** indicate immediacy of completion. Four generations is a **long period of time**. As a consequence, the uses of וַיְהִי כֵן in Genesis chapter one do not indicate immediate completion and are consistent with understanding יום "yom" as meaning a long period of time. That interpretation becomes compelling when combined with:

1. The events being affirmed known to ordinarily take more than a day time.
2. וַיְהִי כֵן more appropriately translated "and so it came to pass."
3. Multiple indications of indefinite time intervals in the other creative times.

Time intervals #2 and #3 are of indefinite duration. "An evening" is one of many and "a morning" is one of many. As a consequence, all three time **intervals do not indicate an immediacy of occurrence.**

**Hence we find biblical support for the view that the creative times are long periods of time, i.e., the day-age view - a preferred view because it requires no additional assumptions about the duration of the three time intervals.**

In aggregate, the three indefinite time intervals suggest that the author of Genesis chapter one **did not intend** to indicate the specific duration of the time involved in the creative times. The pattern of the six creative times in Genesis chapter one do indicate a sequence of events, and the structure clearly intends to inform that the God of the Bible was the one commanding the events to take place.

**Summary: In this study we have found that:**

1. The Hebrew word וַיְהִי indicates the presence of a shift in time for the two וַיְהִי clauses in the concluding phrases of the creative times in Genesis chapter one.
2. The Hebrew word עֶרֶב "evening" should be translated as "an evening," and the word בֹּקֶר "morning" should be translated as "a morning" ( i.e., one of many), and both give no indication of the time duration of the creative times.
3. The translations "and there was an evening, and there was a morning, . . . ." or "and there came to pass an evening, and there came to pass a morning,. . . ." reveal the shift in reference time for each clause, and a time interval of unstated duration between the "an evening" and the "a morning." In the examples on pages 2-4, the time intervals were much longer than 24 hours.

4. The phrase וַיְהִי כֵן "and it was so" (better translated "and so it came to pass") indicates command fulfillment at a future time. This was exemplified by 2 Kings 15:12 (see page 6). In Amos 5:14, וַיְהִי כֵן refers to a future completion, and in Judges 6:37-38, וַיְהִי כֵן refers to a fulfillment on the day after the day of speaking of the request.
5. **The text supports the long time meaning of the Hebrew word יום "yom,"** one of the literal meanings of the Hebrew word יום "yom."

In my opinion, the **long time** meaning is to be preferred because it accommodates the indefinite nature of all three of the וַיְהִי inserted time intervals without making additional assumptions. All three **do not** indicate an immediacy of occurrence within a **24-hour time period**. The evidence that has been presented suggests that the author of Genesis chapter one **did not** intend to indicate the specific duration of the time involved in the creative times.

### **Genesis chapter one and Theology**

Commentaries on Genesis chapter one often interpret Genesis 1:14-19 as refuting the ancient view that the sun and moon were gods, had powers, and were to be worshiped. They note that Genesis chapter one does not use the names of these gods, but rather represents the sun and moon as lights created by, and under the control of, the God of the Bible.<sup>8</sup>

A recent paper has pointed out that the use of the Hebrew אֱלֹהִים Elohim in referring to God in Genesis chapter one also has theological significance.<sup>9</sup> That paper says:

"The third way the passage proclaims monotheism is subtle but highly effective, especially for ancient readers. It has to do with the use, or rather non-use, of God's personal name. Pagan creation myths always named their gods so that readers could know which god did what. In the Babylonian Enuma elish no fewer than nine separate deities are named in the first two paragraphs."

and:

"The author in fact refuses to use the normal Hebrew words for sun and moon, shamash and yarih, which may have been construed as divine names corresponding to Amon-Re in Egyptian tradition."<sup>10</sup>

Genesis 1:1 stands as a direct refutation to the starting conditions of the Egyptian creation stories. These stories start with water and darkness. Genesis 1:1 starts with the God of the Bible as the preexisting causal agent followed by the creation of the universe i.e., the heavens and the earth. The theological statement of Genesis 1:1, contradicting the Egyptian starting conditions, also has physically observable consequences - consequences that have now been observed. The long-held Christian interpretation that there was a beginning of the matter of our universe, theologically asserted true, has now been found physically true by scientific observations.

A recently published book has questioned the fixation on requiring Genesis chapter one to be a chronological description of all the physical creative events in a sequence of 24 hour days.<sup>11</sup> Genesis chapter 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 not a complete description of the physical events that transpired.

### **What about Genesis 1:11-13 and the 24-hour day interpretation?**

Are any models which assume a 24-hour day possibly consistent with the Hebrew? Yes, but they are different than the 24-hour day model commonly advocated today. One such a model is shown following.

<sup>8</sup> One example is : Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11* (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN), 1995. page 127.

<sup>9</sup> John P. Dickson, The Genesis of Everything: An historical account of the Bible's opening chapter, ISCAST Online Journal 2008, Vol. 4, page 12. [http://www.iscast.org/journal/articles/Dickson\\_J\\_2008-03\\_Genesis\\_Of\\_Everything.pdf](http://www.iscast.org/journal/articles/Dickson_J_2008-03_Genesis_Of_Everything.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., page 14

<sup>11</sup> Johnney V. Miller and John M. Soden, *In The Beginning. . . We Misunderstood*, (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids , MI), 2012



The table below illustrates features required for 24-hour models to be consistent with the Hebrew text.

THE LONG CREATIVE TIMES MODEL	THE "DAY of COMMAND" MODEL
<p>Creative Time Three: Starts with "And God said . . ." (a long time, i.e., "day-age")</p> <p>Command completion within the <b>long creative time</b>.</p>	<p>Creative Time Three: 24 hours</p> <p>Starts with "And God said. . ." a daytime of command that includes the flash forward and return to the end of the daytime of command. The daytime concludes with "and there was an evening" and the 24-day concludes with "and there was a morning."</p> <p>Command completion in a <b>long time interval</b> between the "days of command."</p>
<p>Creative Time Four: Starts with "And God said. . ."</p>	<p>Creative Time Four: Starts with "And God said. . ."</p>

In the above model the phrase וַיְהִי כֵן "and so it came to pass" introduces a flash forward - to a time when the commands have been completed. Genesis 1:12 adds a statement confirming the completion that ends with ". . .and God saw that it was good." The following וַיְהִי עֶרֶב "And there was an evening" ends the flash forward and returns the narrative to an evening following the daytime of the speaking of the command. In this case, we **assume** that this is the evening of the daytime of the speaking of the command. Time interval # 3 remains, but is **arbitrarily** set to be an ordinary nighttime resulting in a 24-hour day of command.

Even with the above assumptions, a 24 hour day model does not lead to immediately consecutive 24-hour days. There is another undefined time interval. In Hebrew narrative, the time interval between the actions in successive sentences is often not specified, and cannot just be assumed to be zero. To do so imposes a conclusion onto the text; it is not a reading derived from the text. The time between the "and there was morning" and the next "And God said . . ." remains unspecified, and cannot just be assumed away. Hence we find biblical support for a "day of command" view as depicted above. A number of differing "day of command" proposals and interpretations have been made.<sup>12</sup>

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.

**This study has found the consecutive 24-hour day interpretation favored by advocates of the Young Earth view to be impaired because:**

1. The consecutive 24-hour day Young Earth interpretation fails to accommodate the indication of future fulfillment by the phrase וַיְהִי כֵן "and it was so," a phrase better translated "and so it came to pass" (see page 7).
2. The consecutive 24-hour day Young Earth interpretation fails to accommodate the time interval of unstated duration between the "an evening" and the "a morning" (see page 7).
3. The consecutive 24-hour day Young Earth interpretation fails to accommodate the time interval of unstated duration between the starting of the next creative time and the time of speaking of the next command.<sup>13</sup>

The consecutive 24-hour day interpretation favored by advocates of the Young Earth view is also impaired, because the argument based on the numbering of sequential days elsewhere in the Bible is inapplicable. That is shown in another paper found on this website.

See: <http://www.creationingenesis.com/TheHebrewWordYOM.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> An interesting review of "Day of Command" type views, intermittent day views, and an advocacy of "Days of Divine Fiat," can be found in: Alan Hayward, *Creation and Evolution*, (Bethnay House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN, 1995) pages 167-178, ISBN 1556616791.

<sup>13</sup> See addendum page 10 of this document.

# Addendum

## 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, יום "a day" third” of Genesis 1:13 and the following “And God said . . .” of Genesis 1:14 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. 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.