



God's Decree of Creation

When "Other" Came Into Being

(Westminster Confession of Faith IV:1)

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Part 2

The Events of Genesis One

Caution In Trying To Resolve Confusing Data

Among those who firmly adhere to the biblical teaching of special creation, the question of the age of the universe often becomes a major issue. While the Bible never directly gives an age for the earth, various approaches yield either greater or lesser degrees of certainty about how long ago the first elements of our universe were called into being by God, and of the degree to which God by his sovereign providence dealt with the universe after each item was specially created.

Some understand Scripture as demanding a relatively young age for the universe. Others are not convinced that the passages of Scripture used necessarily indicate a more recent origin of all things.

As our knowledge of the physical world increases, we have enormous amounts of data to consider as we attempt to obey the biblical mandate of beholding God's revealed glory, truth, power, and nature in all that he made (Psalm 19:1-2 and Romans 1:20). These texts, and others like them, imply that an objective study of nature is a legitimate discipline yielding reasonably understandable and meaningful results, though clearly the effects of sin obscure our ability to neutrally interpret what we observe.

Obviously God's self-revelation is always consistent with itself. When our interpretations appear to conflict, it is fair to re-evaluate our approach to the physical universe and to make certain that our understanding of Scripture is accurate. We must always attempt to remove the inconsistencies that could only have come from our own imperfect understanding.

Published results in the fields of geology, planetology, astrophysics, nucleonics, thermodynamics, genetics and paleontology regularly make claims to great antiquity. They base their conclusions upon observed measurements and interpretations that consider currently accepted values of specific physical constants and their mathematical relationships. There have also been some who dissent from the majority by insisting that the evidence could also be interpreted in a way consistent with a presumed young earth.

Many who are pledged to fidelity regarding the biblical texts have also published results that imply that Genesis One indicates a fairly recent time of creation compared with the antiquitous claims of the majority in the scientific community. Others, equally dedicated to the full inerrancy of the Bible, disagree. It is therefore important to ask if the conclusions drawn from the data in Genesis One are based upon superficial appearances rather than what is necessarily deduced from the inspired text alone. It is also fair to ask if we are justified in finding time clues in passages which were not used in that way by the inspired writers.

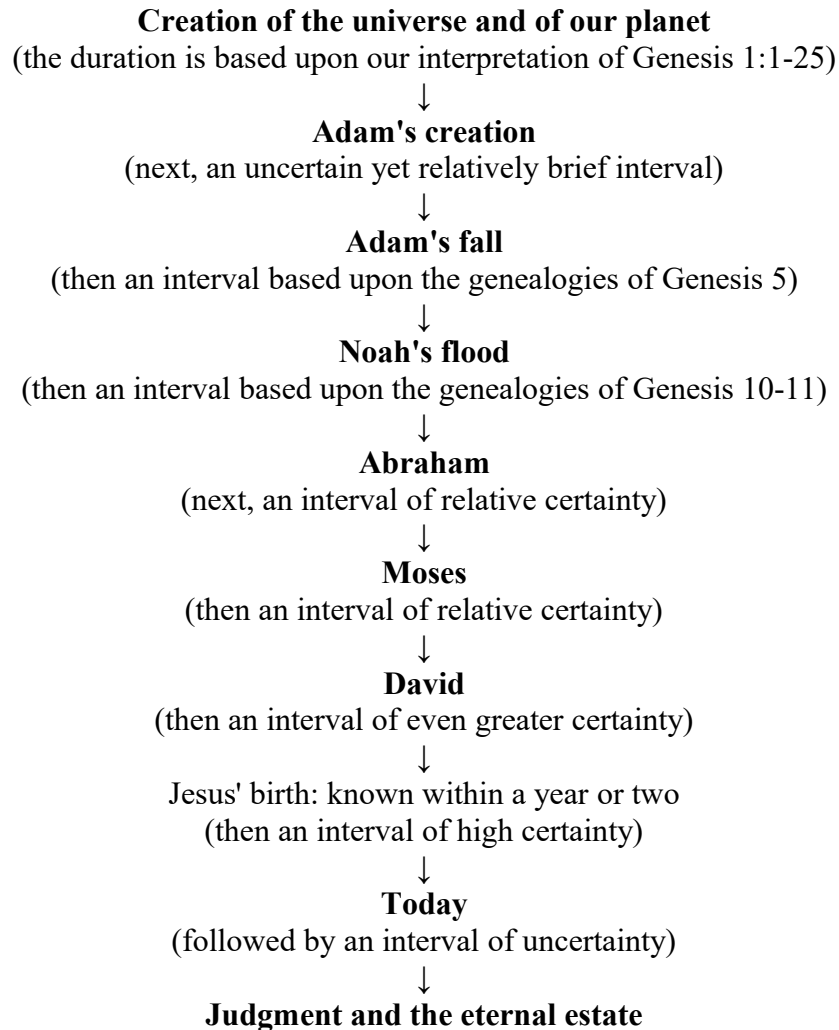
This perceived tension has produced many views of Genesis One that attempt to reconcile these two apparently opposite conclusions. We cannot escape our contemporary context when we consider both the natural and the scriptural data.

Our goal as Reformed interpreters of Scripture must be to discover the boundaries set by God's word, and to understand all our sensory and theoretical information within the limits of those boundaries.

To clarify those boundaries we must examine certain intervals of time between major events in the biblical record. Some of those intervals are well attested by direct biblical statements. Others involve less direct data

and must rest upon that which can be directly deduced from the information God has given us in his word. Primarily this depends upon our interpretation of genealogical records, and of the days and events of Genesis One.

A Chart Showing the Intervals Between Major Events



The age of the universe and earth depends upon how these intervals are interpreted.

Filling in the Gaps

Those in the various schools of thought concerning the age of the universe and the days of Genesis chapter one tend to agree upon the approximate dating of the era of Abraham. They all place him within the same order of magnitude in years B.C. It appears that he lived nearly 2000 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, about 4000 years before the present. The question then comes down to how much time elapsed from Noah to Abraham, then from Adam to Noah. These intervals are addressed only in the genealogies of Genesis 5, 10, and 11. Prior to the time of Adam, we have the information given in Genesis One of the things God made before he created the first man.

Some say that the earth can be no older than about six to ten thousand years. Some understand our observed measurements of the universe as giving an age in the realm of several billions of years. Others settle upon numbers somewhere between the two, insisting that the biblical data cannot be expanded to more than a few million years B.C. for the time of creation. To fairly evaluate those opposing claims we will first look at the genealogical information, then at the exegesis of the first chapter of Genesis and related passages.

From Abraham back to Adam

There are two classic exegetical works which offer a detailed analysis of the genealogical passages of Genesis. The reader is urged to obtain and study these essays. They are:

1. William Henry Green *Primeval Chronology* (available in our Institute's Creation Lesson index)

2. B.B. Warfield *On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race*

The conclusion drawn in these studies is that the genealogies of the Bible should not be used to produce exact dates for the time of Noah and Adam.

The purpose of Hebrew Genealogies is to show line of descent, not contiguous lineage. They indicate that the years in ancient biblical genealogies are not intended to be added up to obtain the age of mankind.

For example, in Matthew 1:1 Jesus is called "[the son of David, the son of Abraham](#)." This verse obviously omits many generations between each. Yet anyone familiar with Scripture as were the original readers of Matthew's gospel would not make the mistake of assuming that the immediate father of Jesus was David, or that his immediate grandfather was Abraham.

A little farther on in the same chapter (Matthew 1:8) the statement that "[Joram begat Uzziah](#)" omits mention of intervening generations such as Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:25), Joash (2 Kings 12:1), and Amaziah (2 Kings 14:1). In Matthew 1:11 the genealogy omits Jehoiakim after Josiah (2 Kings 23:34 and 1 Chronicles 3:16).

A comparison of the genealogies in the Old Testament show similar obviously intended gaps. The genealogy in Ezra 7:3 says that Azariah was the son of Meraioth. When compared that with 1 Chronicles 6:3-14 it becomes evident that the names of six entire generations were left out. Many such examples are cited in the works of Green and Warfield.

Such genealogical omissions occur regularly in the Bible. The original Hebrew readers would have expected such gaps. There is no error. The genealogies were never intended to be complete records showing all steps linking each person named. Such regularity in the omission of generations should caution us against using Genesis 5 and 11 to establish precise time charts.

The Genesis expression "[begat](#)" (KJV), or "[fathered](#)" (ESV), "[became the father of](#)" (NASB), translates the Hebrew word "[yelad](#)" (יָלַד). It's better translated "[became an ancestor of](#)". In Matthew 1 the expression "[son of](#)" translates the Greek word "[huiou](#)" (υἱου). It's better translated "[descendant of](#)". The intent in these expressions is to show lineage without implying generational contiguity between the individuals mentioned. If this was not the understood meanings there would be errors in the genealogical records.

It must be admitted that nowhere in the Bible are the years of genealogies added up, nor is there any biblical support showing that it would be valid to add them up for such a purpose. It is always dangerous to introduce methods of interpretation not themselves derived from biblical example.

Why do the numbers in the Genesis genealogies show the person's age when the begetting (or ancestorship) took place? The years show the age at which each person in the line being traced conceived children. When it says that "[Enosh lived 90 years and begat Kenan](#)" it means that Enosh became the ancestor of Kenan when he was 90 years old. This is an amazing and noteworthy fact considering his advanced age. That Enosh was 90 years old when he fathered a child shows us that the ancestor of Kenan became such at what we would consider a very advanced age. The significance of that could be left to various speculations and theories. Clearly there may be other explanations for the numbers. However we might theorize, the facts remove the argument that biblical necessity demands that that they were given to aid us in establishing an exact chronology.

Internal consistency problems arise when the genealogies are simply added up contrary to their actual use in Scripture. If the years are taken without the implied and understood gaps, it would mean that Adam would have been alive at the same time as Enoch, Methuselah and Lamech. It would mean that in the 120 years prior to the flood (when the Bible makes no mention of a righteous man except for Noah) Methuselah and Lamech would still have been alive. Noah would have been still alive in time of Abraham, and Noah's son Shem outlived Abraham. These situations are not impossible, but are not very likely considering the accounts as recorded and referred to by the Scriptures themselves.

When gaps are assumed in those genealogies according to the established biblical usage, the dating of Noah and Adam becomes impossible. It has even been suggested that some of the names in ancient genealogies may refer to the rise of nations rather than just the individuals identified, perhaps their names are listed as the founders of nations. This is why some who hold to a young earth view find little problem with extending the time of Adam

to an era tens of thousands of years ago. Some will, by the same arguments, comfortably allow the date of Adam to be some powers of ten greater than that obtained by simply adding up the numbers in the genealogies.

From Adam back to the beginning of creation

One of the most contested intervals is the time is the length of the creation period up to the actual creation of Adam. This involves the meanings of the words used in Genesis One, and the structure of the context as the creative acts of God are described.

The Term "Day" in Genesis One

One of the greatest areas of debate centers on how the word "day" is used in Genesis one. There are two separate issues that need to be addressed. The first problem is to determine the limit and range of meanings of the original term used in the inspired text. The second problem is to narrow the allowable meanings to those consistent with the way the word is used in each particular context.

As we proceed it must always be our goal to determine to the best of our ability the meaning intended as the Holy Spirit moved Moses to write Genesis. We must not defend the meaning of a particular term simply because it seems to fit best with what we would like to prove. A strong expectation will tend to prejudice the process. Our theories of origins must emerge from the facts, rather than being used to shape the lines of study.

Question 1: What is the meaning of the Hebrew term for day?

The Hebrew word translated "day" is "yom" (יוֹם). It is used in many places in the Hebrew Scriptures. The word appears a little over 2,000 times in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. A study of those passages will show that, like our English word "day", it does not have just one meaning. It has a range of meanings. The original Hebrew readers would be left to determine from each context which use is intended in each case.

There are **four basic meanings** for the word yom.

1) **Yom** sometimes identifies **the lighted portion of a calendar day** which is approximately 12 hours long. The "day" in this sense would be longer in the summers and shorter in the winters and would differ at various latitudes of the earth. This use of the word does not so much concern itself with how long the day light period lasts, as it does with differentiating the period of light from the period of darkness we call "night". In the context under consideration the word twice appears to take that meaning: Genesis 1:5, 16 "**the light He called day.**"

2) **Yom** sometimes means **a 24-hour period of time**. This use of the word is particularly concerned with the time it takes between sunsets. We now know that represents one rotation of the earth on its axis. For example in Exodus 20:8-10 the moral issue being addressed was that a full 24 hour period should be set aside for remembering the weekly Creation Sabbath as a holy day. "**Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.**"

3) **Yom** can also refer to **a specific interval much longer than a 24-hour period of time**. It is translated that way in the following places: Exodus 13:10 "**year-to-year**", Proverbs 25:13 "**the time of harvest**", and in the immediate context of the record of creation in Genesis 2:4 "**This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven.**" There in Genesis 2:4 it clearly stands for the whole era of creation.

4) **Yom** can also mean **an indefinite period of time**. This is the meaning in: Genesis 35:3 "**in the day of my distress**", and in Proverbs 31:25 "**she smiles at the future** (yom)" (NASB).

Given this broad range of meanings for "yom" we are left with each context to determine what is meant in any given case. This does not leave us confused. In most contexts there is little doubt as to what is meant. A study of how we use the English word "day" shows the same broad categories. Clearly we are not confused when we hear someone make mention of how things were "in my day" or "in the day of Moses". We do not become puzzled as if only one 24-hour period was meant. If we say that we would rather do our work "during the day" we would naturally understand that we would rather do it in daylight rather than during the part of every 24-hour period when it is dark.

This brings us to the second question:

Question 2: Which of these meanings for the word day is most consistent with its use in Genesis one?

Considering the basic meanings of the word yom as summarized above, we can immediately eliminate the first definition. The six numbered days in Genesis one cannot be just the period of daylight since each of the six is

designated by the expression "[and there was evening and there was morning](#)". Since evening is associated with the beginning of the period of darkness which then extends until the sun rises in the morning, there is no way to read this without including darkness.

The expression "[and there was evening and there was morning](#)" seems to imply a literal 24 hour day which is made up of an evening and a morning. It certainly does not seem to fit the usual way we would describe long periods of time, either of definite or of indefinite length. While it is true that such an expression could be used in a figurative sense, there is nothing in the immediate context that would direct the reader to suspect a non-literal meaning for such common terms as evening and morning. **It appears that the 24-hour meaning of the word yom is the most reasonable in this context.**

This brings us to a third question which is much more complex:

Question 3: What took place on each numbered day in Genesis One, and do the six numbered days follow immediately upon one another?

Structure of the "day passages"

God's work of creation occurred in various periods which are presented to have taken place chronologically in the order reported in Genesis one. Each of the six segments of the record begins with God's decree relating to a specific phase of his over-all plan to create all the heavens and the earth. Each phase climaxes with God's observation and announcement that a particular stage in the realizing of his intended creation had been essentially completed. This final approval would necessarily have taken place on one particular 24-hour day.

Notice there are six general elements associated with the first creative phase as presented in Genesis 1:3-5. They fall into three more basic categories: 1) the decree of what is to be created, 2) the acts of God in realizing his decree, and 3) the final approbation that what he had decreed had come into physical existence.

First: declaration

God had eternally decreed all things he would bring into being by the work of special creation. Each of the six phases of creation in Genesis one begins with the particular desire of God toward one part of that over-all decree being spoken. It shows the implementation of that intention as his plan was supernaturally brought into being in the realm of a physical universe. The first of these actions is recorded in Genesis 1:3a when God said, "[let there be light](#)". In Hebrew his word is a very brief statement using just two words, "[yehi 'or](#)" ([יהי אור](#)), which most simply stated means "[be light](#)".

Second: creation

The act of actual creation then took place by which what God had spoken was brought into being. Genesis 1:3b uses the exact same Hebrew expression used in the decree showing its enactment. It says, "[and there was light](#)." Combining the Hebrew with our translation it says, God said, "[yehi 'or and yehi 'or](#)." Literally we might translate the second use of the phrase as, "[and there be light](#)". It is a bit awkward in English. We could have more accurately translated it, "[God said be light, and there be light](#)."

Third: preliminary observation

Then there was a moment of divine observation of the state of that which he had created up to that point as to its conformity with what had been decreed. 1:4a "[God saw the light - that it was good](#)". The word for "[good](#)" here is "[tov](#)" ([טוב](#)). Of course light cannot be morally good or evil. The meaning is that it was seen to conform precisely to that which the Creator intended. In that sense it could be called "[good](#)".

Fourth: modification

A further act follows by which the decree's full intent was attained. In Genesis 1:4b it says, "[God separated light from darkness](#)"

Fifth: final declaration

When this particular aspect of his decree was essentially complete, when it met the demands of his intent as to the basic qualities he called into being, God made a pronouncement marking the success of his work. In this case, God gave a name to what he had now fully brought into existence out of nothing. God spoke in Genesis 1:5a, "[he ... called the light day](#)" ([vay-yiqra' 'elohim la'or yom](#) - [ויקרא אלהים לאור יום](#)), "[and the darkness he called night](#)" ([ve-lakhushek qara' lay-lah](#) - [ולחשך קרא לילה](#)).

Sixth: day-marker

Finally we come to the day-marker. This statement ends each phase in the unfolding of his decree indicating the essential completeness of what God had declared to make. Genesis 1:5b says, "[And there was evening and there was morning, one day.](#)" ([va-yehi-`erev va-yehi-boqer yom 'ekhad](#) - [וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד](#)).

The completion of the first creation period is marked out by an evening and a morning, the usual Hebrew way of reckoning a standard calendar day. The final act of approbation was an observance by God which would have taken but an instant and certainly would have occurred on a particular and literal 24-hour day. It is designated "[Day One](#)" ("[yom 'ekhad](#)" - [יוֹם אֶחָד](#)). It is the first day used to mark the completion of a particular phase of creation.

A key question is, which of the events mentioned in verses 3 through 5 should be understood as having taken place on the day numbered at the end of the passage?

There is little doubt in the context of Genesis 1:5 that the day included the act of God's naming the light day and the darkness night. However, the other events are not as clearly shown to have occurred on the day when God made his final approbation by giving an actual name to his completed work.

We then need to ask: Which of the events of Genesis 1:3-5 necessarily took place on the same literal day as God's final approbation? The events are listed as follows:

1. the act of declaration that initiated the bringing of this part of the eternal decree into physical reality
2. the entire creative process of bringing light into being
3. the determination and declaration that light was good,
essentially fulfilling the initial part of that particular thing which had been decreed
4. the division of light from darkness
5. the naming of the light and darkness indicating that this part of his eternal decree to create all things had been fulfilled

It is unsound to claim with certainty, using this inspired text alone, that all the events associated with the creating of light necessarily took place on the same literal day when God gave his final approval of his work. To do so would violate the exegetical minimalism demanded by Scripture and summarized in WCF 1:6. The Scriptures must be left to what they actually say, and not pressed beyond that.

To state this in terms of a specific interval of time necessitates a cautious degree of uncertainty. We cannot rule out that all of these events may have been accomplished by God on one literal day. However, the evidence does not demand that all the events took place on that one literal day of God's final approval. The text simply does not say.

A suggested conclusion:

We can conclude that at some time God began the process of realizing his eternal decree by saying that light should appear. Then by a process of indeterminant duration he superintended by his immediate creative power the coming into being of light.

After an unspecified period of time (moments or eons) light had attained the state of being in the universe that essentially fulfilled its decreed nature. At some point God observed the light and determined that his decree had essentially reached one part of its goal. He then pronounced that the light was "good".

Then a further process took place. Light was divided from darkness. We understand darkness to necessarily imply that either sufficient quantities and appropriate states of matter had been brought into existence to act as an absorbing buffer causing the photons of light to be kept from some parts of space, or that energy fields of some kind contained the photons from entering certain spaces. This is the definition of physical darkness assumed all through Scripture. It is also consistent with our natural observation of the handiwork of our Creator.

Then, after another unspecified period, long or brief, God made his final pronouncement concerning this phase of his decree of creation by calling the light "[day](#)", and the darkness "[night](#)". This last act is marked out as occupying a specific moment when this first stage of God's creation was essentially complete. This would have occurred on one particular 24-hour day which commemorates the completeness of this segment of created physical reality. Therefore it is called "[day one](#)".

It's helpful to note that it does not say "[the first day](#)." It uses the Hebrew cardinal number for "[one](#)" - "[akhad](#)"

(אחד), not the ordinal number for "first". "rishon" (רִשׁוֹן). This is the day of completeness "number one". There are five more such days on which other phases of his decree of creation would similarly be pronounced complete. Then, when the acts of special creation ceased, a seventh day would be designated as commemorative of the completeness of the whole process and declared as Sabbath. More will be said about the designation of the seventh day as Sabbath in Part 3 of this study.

Nothing in the inspired text alone presses the reader to conclude that the first declaration of God concerning light and the act of bringing it into existence, and the subsequent actions of God upon existing light, and his final declaration, all occurred within the boundaries of the 24 hour day with which the final approbation is associated. The decree and the actual processes described following it may have all taken place within moments, or over a very long period of time. This is not stated here and therefore cannot be determined from this text by itself.

The same principle may be extended to the record of the other phases of creation. There are the same three essential elements in each creative period:

1. a declaration to create

God, by his word, declared that some specific phase of his eternal decree of creation should be realized in what we know as the physical universe.

2. an act of special creation fulfilling God's declaration

This usually includes several operations and modifications of the original substance made. This entire process is accomplished by immediate and special creation. There can be no allowance made for these processes to have taken place by natural unattended laws independent of the creative and providential powers of God. This may at times include some modification of that which had been initially created. This may involve some processes by which the initial conditions were shaped by God to more exactly meet the demands of his eternal intentions.

3. an inspection by God and his pronouncement of essential completeness

Only this final element is directly stated to occur during the "yom" moment.

The chart following identifies the key elements that make up each period of creation. The wording is based upon the King James Version. The numbers are the verses in Genesis chapter 1.

Creation Phase 1

Decree: 3 [Let there be light](#)

God's Act(s): 3-4 [and there was light-- God divided the light from the darkness](#)

Approval: 4-5 [God saw the light, that it was good - God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night {day one}](#)

Creation Phase 2

Decree: 6 [Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.](#)

God's Act(s): 7 [and God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament](#)

Approval: 8 [God called the firmament Heaven {day two}](#)

Creation Phase 3a

Decree: 9 [Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear](#)

God's Act(s): 9 [and it was so.](#)

Approval: 10 [God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas God saw that it was good.](#)

Creation Phase 3b

Decree: 11 [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](#)

God's Act(s): 11-12 [and it was so - 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](#)

Approval: 12 [God saw that it was good {day three}](#)

Creation Phase 4

Decree: 14-15 God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth:

God's Act(s): 15-17 and it was so - God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of th heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness:

Approval: 18 God saw that it was good {day four}

Creation Phase 5

Decree: 20 God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

God's Act(s): 21 God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind:

Approval: 21-22 and God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. {day five}

Creation Phase 6a

Decree: 24 God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind

God's Act(s): 24-25 and it was so. - God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind

Approval: 25 and God saw that it was good.

Creation Phase 6b

Decree: 26 God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

God's Act(s): 27-30 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. - God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: - and it was so.

Approval: 31 God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. {day six}

The chart illustrates that the specific events associated with each literal 24-hour day that ends each phase of creation includes God's final act of approbation of a particular part of his over-all decree to bring the universe, and our world in particular, into physical existence. It may or may not include the other events associated with that particular period of creation.

At the beginning of each creative period God announces that some phase of his eternal decree was to be brought into being. He then brings it into being. Some modification, statement, or further process is often mentioned such as gathering together, or bringing forth, shaping that part of creation toward its intended end. Finally God observes and announces that the initiating decree had been essentially fulfilled. Because this last element is the only one clearly established to occur on each of the days mentioned in Genesis one, this interpretation of Genesis one is sometimes called the "*Inspection Day Model*" or the "*Approbation Day Model*".

The actual days mentioned may or may not have been contiguous with one another with the exception of the seventh day which by virtue of its purpose and definition is contiguous with the sixth.

This view does not necessarily demand a young or old earth view. It allows for both as to the theological conclusions drawn from the text. The only data that would tend toward limiting the age of the universe would come from external sources derived from scientific observations not driven by the imagined boundaries of a preconceived assumption about the age of the universe. Therefore such a view must not be employed in the formation of a creedal statement of revealed theology which would bind the conscience of a believer or a

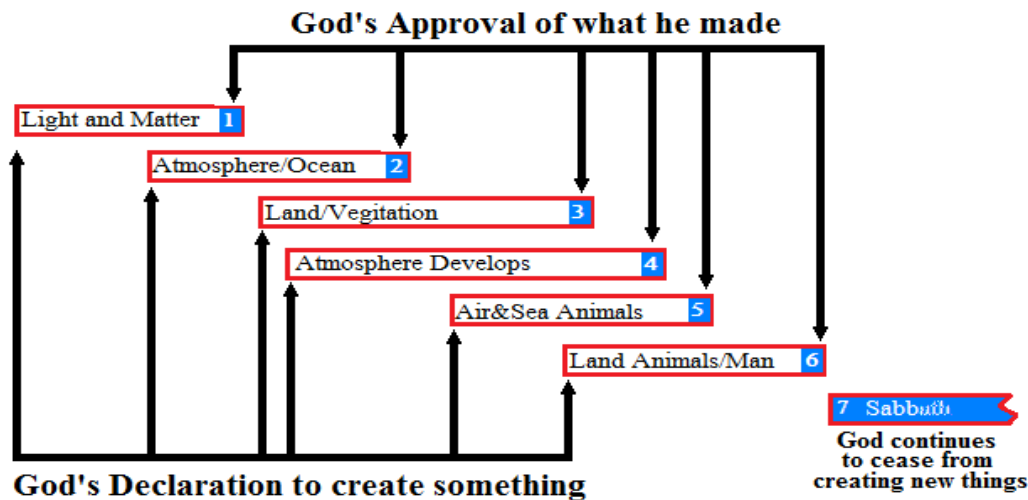
minister of the word beyond what is either directly stated or is necessarily derived from God's inspired word alone.

Of course other portions of the Bible must be considered along with Genesis chapter one before such a conclusion could be safely drawn. This will be the subject of the next part of this study.

This view allows for a possible overlapping of the periods of creation and an interaction of the elements of each creative interval as they were nearing completion.

"Inspection Day" or "Approbation Day" view

The Days of Genesis One



not to scale - the chart shows possible overlap as creation progressed

This removes the issue of the dependence of animals upon certain plants, and plants upon certain animals. While God was calling into existence the creatures affirmed to have been made as he specified on the fifth day, those of the third day may still have been in the process of being formed by special creation and sovereign providence. Again this is not a necessary element of this view, but it is allowed within the boundaries set by strict exegesis of the inspired text.

The questions of sequence and contiguity are resolved very simply. The days of approbation certainly occur in the chronological sequence given in Genesis one. This is absolutely affirmed in the numbering of the days. It also appears from the text that the declarations that began each period of creation are sequential, though not necessarily waiting to take place until the completion of the previous creative period. God may have declared his creation of the animals of the fifth day and begun his work in specially creating them before the approbation of the work of the third and fourth periods. The term then which begins each portion (the simple conjunctive prefix ("vav" - "ו" in Hebrew) would indicate sequence to the *entire* process, not just to the last part of it. Therefore the days as times of divine observation and affirmation are sequential, literal 24-hour days, but they are not necessarily contiguous (immediately following one another).

Limitations Set and Areas of Theological Freedom

Since no explicit statement is found in God's word telling us the age of the universe or of this planet in particular, we must not let our conclusions go beyond the evidence or intended use of the revealed data. This is a question God has not determined to answer directly by special revelation. It is better that we say we do not know, than to allow extra-biblical questions to introduce theological ideas that do not come from the body of God's special revelation. Our view must neither be motivated by a desire to accommodate current scientific observations or theories, nor by a reaction against them.

This does not mean that the raising of the question has no value. Controversy has repeatedly been used to force the church to re-examine its presumptions and its processes of doing Theology. This is the providential method of grace whereby our creeds are brought into better agreement with what God has spoken. Along the way, we

are bound to appreciate better the content of revealed truth, even if we never reach the certainty we seek about the original question asked.

There are other texts that come to mind in our interpretation of Genesis chapter one. Do they set boundaries which negate the limited boundaries suggested in this study? This is the subject of Part 3.