

How Long Were the "Days" of Creation?

Were the days of creation week "ages"? People insist that God could not set the world in order and create life forms in six literal days. Why?

by Kenneth C. Herrmann

WHY HAS doubt about creation entered Christian minds today? Why do men in this "enlightened age" reject the unmistakable meaning of the Word of God?

For over 3000 years men of God have believed the literal meaning of the account of creation recorded in Genesis 1 and 2. To them the Scripture said that in six 24-hour days God created the heavens and the earth and rested the seventh day.

For 3000 years righteous men have dared to take God's inspired record at face value.

No record is found of "ages" rather than days of creation in the ancient history of the Hebrews or of early Christians.

Why reject the truth of literal days of creation?

What proof is there that God created the present order of things on this earth in six literal days? What difference does it make whether one believes in "ages" of creation or literal days of creation? Let's question the record and set aside doubts once and for all time.

What the Scriptural Record Really Says

Distorted interpretations of the creation record have resulted mainly from two causes: a desire to read a false meaning into the Word of God, and a pitiful ignorance of the account itself.

A brief review of the account of creation is certainly in order here. Open your Bible and study the account thoroughly as you read further in this article and after reading it.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" — this tells about the original creation. The second verse of Genesis 1 refers to a destruc-

tion which came upon the earth through sin and rebellion of Satan and the angels who followed him. (Request our free booklet, *Did God Create a Devil?* for details.)

Darkness was upon the face of the deep. The renewing of our earth to a state of order followed in six days.

At dawn the first day, light penetrated the dense clouds. The clouds rose the second day and an expanse or heaven was formed, the one in which the birds fly. Thus the waters on the earth ("waters under") were separated from the clouds ("waters above"). The ocean receded, dry land appeared and grass and herbs were planted the third day. As the fourth day progressed the sun became visible through the thinning clouds. Toward evening the moon and stars appeared.

Notice how agreeable with the laws of science this is. Birds and sea life were created the fifth day, the land animals with Adam and Eve the sixth, and a day of rest and worship for the man the seventh. Thus in one week order was restored to the earth.

But was it a literal week? Carefully notice that no close is mentioned to the seventh day. Check this point in Genesis 2:1-3. All the other days were "an evening and a morning," but this expression does not follow the seventh day. Why?

Now if, as some teach, the seventh day hasn't ended yet, it would already be almost 6000 years long. And if it were that long couldn't the first six days be similar periods?

The Seventh Day Did End!

Here's evidence from God's Word that the seventh day did end!

Genesis 2:2. "He [God] rested on

the seventh day from all his work." Not "is resting" from all His work!

Exodus 20:11. "The Lord . . . rested the seventh day."

Again Genesis 2:3. "In it [the seventh day] he *had rested*." He blessed the sabbath after He had rested on it.

Hebrews 4:4. "God did rest the seventh day from all his works." Not "is resting"!

The seventh day of creation is past, for on it God rested. No scripture exists saying He is resting on a continuing seventh day! The seventh day of creation week did end.

Double proof of this fact is found in the scriptures telling of the work God has done since that day of rest. "My father WORKETH hitherto [even now], and I work" (John 5:17).

Jeremiah 50:25. "This is the *work* of the Lord God of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans."

Exodus 32:16. "The tables were the *work* of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables."

Joshua 24:31. "Joshua, and . . . the elders . . . which had known all the *works* of the Lord, that he had done for Israel."

God has worked since that seventh day. Both the Father and the One who became Jesus Christ by flesh birth have worked since that first Sabbath day *ended!*

Still See Ages

Yet in the face of God's Word, men will believe "days" to be "ages" and that God is now resting and being refreshed. Thus one sect teaches, "Measured by the length of the 'seventh day,' on which God desists from work and is refreshed, each of those days was 7000 years long."

Reread the preceding scriptures: The 24-hour day upon which God rested had passed and has been followed by nearly 6000 years in which God has worked. Then compare the above quote with Exodus 31:17, "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he *rested* and *was refreshed*." Not *is* (being) refreshed!

Here is the truth. It was on a literal seventh day that God rested. It was a literal seventh day of the week that God hallowed for the human race. The observance of the seventh day and the origin of the week go back to Adam, not Moses.

Following that rest, God blessed the seventh day and set it apart for holy use. The first week, creation week, had ended.

The Witness of Nature

Many witnesses have been given from the Word of God that these creation days were literal days and there is yet more proof. God leaves no room for doubt in the minds of those who diligently study His Word.

Consider the plants which were created on the third day. The sun did not appear until the next day. If these "days" were each 7000 years long then these plants would have had to survive 7000 years without sunshine. Those who believe the days to have been ages which were millions of years long are faced with an even greater absurdity.

Or consider this, plants were made the third day, insects on the sixth. How did certain specialized plants continue to exist through ages without their insect partners? The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states that two groups of insects which include bees, wasps, butterflies and moths could not have existed without the honey-or nectar-bearing plants. Nor could these plants have existed without the insects. Without insects to pollinize them they could not bear seed.

The types of plants which require insects for pollinization are those with brightly colored flowers, having an odor to attract insects and containing nectar to provide them with food. They include such common plants as the maple tree, the strawberry, the blackberry, the honeysuckle, and the

poppy. The Bible states that these plants were made on the third day and that the insects were not made until three days later. Those who claim creation days were each 7000 years long are faced with the conclusion that these original plants must have had to live thousands of years before they could produce seed — an utter impossibility!

Here is the plain simple statement of scripture: "In six days God made heaven and earth." His Word is dependable. Ages will not mix with the Scripture any more than iron will mix with clay.

What Is the Meaning of "Day"?

The word "day" in the Bible is often used to represent an indefinite period of time. In fact the Hebrew word, *Yom*, translated "day" is occasionally translated "time." But in every case where the numerals first, second, third, etc. occur, the word *day* is obviously and clearly referring to a natural 24-hour day as we know it.

The Scripture speaks of the day of vengeance, the day of adversity, the day of temptation, just as we do today, meaning a time or season. Yet when it speaks of the fourteenth day of the month (Lev. 23), the seven days of Unleavened Bread or the fifty days until Pentecost, the word "day" means a 24-hour period.

Symbolically a day may represent a "year" (Ezek. 4:6), or a "thousand years" (II Peter 3:8), but symbolic interpretations may not be applied in all cases. The three days Christ was in the grave were not 3 years or 3000 years. Neither would any symbolic interpretation fit in the first chapters of Genesis where we have proven from nature that they must have been natural days of twenty-four hours.

Another Bible meaning of the word "day" as a 12-hour period is also in common usage today. When it speaks of the three days and three nights Jonah was in the great fish's belly or the three days and three nights Christ was in His grave, the word "day" refers to the daylight part of the 24-hour period. This "day" is by Christ's own definition 12 hours. "Are there not 12 hours in the day?" (John 11:9.)

The scripture used by many as an excuse to believe the days of creation were ages really suggests no such meaning. It is Genesis 2:4 which refers to the time of creation, "In the *day* that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant . . . and every herb." Lacking a numeral before it, it can refer to a longer period of time than 24 hours and it does! This "day" refers to the first six days of creation week.

It takes a great deal of imagination to use this as a proof that a day means an age or even 7000 years.

The Obvious Meaning

Can the word *day* mean 24 hours in one part of a sentence and an age in another part? It would have to if one were to believe in "ages" of creation! Exodus 20:9-11: "Six *days* shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh *day* is the sabbath of the Lord thy God . . . for in six *days* the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh *day*: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it."

The word *day* occurs five times in this one sentence. Can you believe that in the third and fourth occurrences it means an age while in the other three it means a day? Had God meant an age, wouldn't He have used the Hebrew word *dor* to mean age as in Job 8:8, "Enquire, I pray of thee, of the former age"?

In each of these five occurrences in Exodus 20, God is obviously speaking of the same unit of time, a 24-hour day. And as the word "day" means a twenty-four hour period here it has to mean the same in Genesis.

If God had created light, day and night, and then waited 1000 years (or 7000 years) to form the heavens, He would have been resting before the seventh day arrived.

If He formed the heavens on a second day and then waited 1000 years to form the seas and the land, He would have been resting again before the seventh day arrived. Note the scripture again: "For *in six days* the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and *was refreshed*." After

six days of continual labor — six days spent in bringing our earth to a state of order — God rested. He *was* refreshed on the seventh day. If that seventh day were still continuing, the scripture would read that He is now “being refreshed.”

As a final proof that the days of creation were literal days, reread Genesis 1:3-5, 14-19 with special attention on the words *evening* and *morning, night*

and *day, darkness* and *light*. All have continued since creation. We are not confused as to what they are.

Note that the sun was appointed “to divide the light from the darkness” — to divide day from night. Does sun-down divide anything but literal days?

No place in the Scripture does God imply that He took anything but a natural week of ordinary days to bring life and order to the earth.

Evenings and mornings have continued, the week has continued, the Sabbath set apart for rest at creation has continued, all pointing back to that first creation week. The truth is plain and without scriptural contradiction. There is no room to believe in ages, when you accept the Scriptures as they are in the light of the Word of God and in accordance with nature, the handiwork of God. □

MAILING ADDRESSES WORLDWIDE:

IN THE UNITED STATES

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE PRESS
P. O. Box 111
Pasadena, California 91123

IN SOUTH AFRICA

P. O. Box 1060
Johannesburg, 2000

IN AUSTRALIA

G. P. O. Box 345
Sydney, NSW 2001
Australia

IN CANADA

P. O. Box 44, Sta. A
Vancouver 1, B.C.

IN THE PHILIPPINES

P. O. Box 1111
Makati, Rizal D-708

IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

P. O. Box 111
St. Albans, Herts.
England

IN NEW ZEALAND

P. O. Box 2709
Auckland 1, New Zealand

THIS REPRINT ARTICLE IS NOT TO BE SOLD. It is provided as a public service in the public interest by Ambassador College — made possible by the contributions of those who, voluntarily, have become co-workers in support of this worldwide work. Ambassador College, as a separate corporation, is associated with the Worldwide Church of God, and a portion of the financial needs of the work is supplied by that Church. The publishers have nothing to sell, and although contributions are gratefully welcomed, no solicitation is ever made to the public for financial support.