

# Why does the Doctrine of Creation Matter?

Dominion Covenant Church

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## I. Introduction

### A. *What is at stake here?*

#### 1. **It is not just a theoretical or intellectual debate.**

When I was in high school I was a devoted atheist. I was a humanist/naturalist and I meant it. I figured that man could solve all his problems through science. After all, scientists had cured polio, ended famines, and built spacecraft. I also thought that religion, be it Christian religion or Hindu religion, was an emotional crutch developed by weak minds who needed some comfort and consolation. Relevant to the topic at hand, I definitely thought that the world was as old as the science books at my high school said (billions of years) and everything we see came about by evolution.

I recall a specific conversation when I was a teenager. I had just stated those beliefs to my dad and he responded (note: he is not a Christian), “That’s what you may think now, but there is many a scientist who on his deathbed hopes for something more.” I dismissed his comment then but it came back to my mind about 13 years later when God sought fit to extend his mercy to me and He saved me.

Shortly after I got saved, I embarked on a read-the-Bible-in-a-year program. When I read the Genesis account of creation I immediately believed it. The awesome power of God was at work. I’m referring to his power that created the physical universe *as well as* his power that changed my thinking completely. The same power that was at work in raising Jesus from the dead and enthroning him on high is at work in the believer (Eph 1.19-20). This same power also created the universe and everything in it (Ps 33.6); this same power recreated my mind in true righteousness and holiness (Eph 4.22-24) such that I now believe the truth! Thus, I have a very personal interest in the doctrine of creation because it is a landmark for my own transition from ignorance to wisdom. This transition is not a reason for me to boast for it is God who worked in me to will and to do of his good pleasure.

I also am greatly interested in this topic because it is affecting the church. Last fall I had a conversation that led me to prepare this topic. I was chatting with another conference attendee in Valley Forge, PA and he asked me what church I was with/what denomination? I said, “the PCA.” He responded that he too attended a PCA church and added, “What a great denomination.” I replied, “Yep, pretty good. Not perfect, but better than many.” He volunteered, “I am glad the PCA isn’t so strict about things like creation.” I had to pause. When I had previously said the PCA is an imperfect denomination, foremost in my mind was the fact that the PCA has dropped the ball and taken a step toward liberalism by being *permissive* on creation. What was I to say to this man who was praising the very thing that to me is a grievous error?

His next comment provided the direction of my response that follows. He said, “I’m not an atheist evolutionist, mind you. Why does it matter if it’s the Day-Age Theory or Framework Hypothesis?”

## **2. Ideas have consequences.**

This, then, is the task at hand: to answer the question, “Why does it matter?” I hope I can answer that convincingly. It does matter. It matters because the Christian Faith crumbles without the foundation of the proper doctrine of creation.

## **II. Overview of the theories**

To begin I will briefly summarize the competing views so we are clear on the terminology.

### ***A. Naturalistic Evolution—random mutations exposed to natural forces lead to greater diversity and complexity; ultimately complex life developed from pre-existent non-living matter.***

Evolution in its most consistent form posits that everything we see in the world has come about through random mutations as physical matter was exposed to outside physical forces. Given very long periods of time these accumulated changes have led to greater diversity and complexity such that simple elements led to single-cell life that led to the most complex life forms including humans. There is no guiding force and no purposeful direction to the process. Within this system man has no unique role (he is just another animal), God does not rule over the world (He plays no part in it), and natural science can give us all the answers (nature is the sole source of information).

***B. Theistic Evolution—“Evolution” plus god.***

Next is Theistic Evolution. It is like secular evolution except that it adds a god to the process. They rightly acknowledge that the Bible teaches God “created” the world so they don’t cut Him out entirely. Various Theistic Evolutionists differ on the role of this god. God may have just gotten things going or god may also have later intervened.

***C. Day-Age—the “days” of Genesis 1 are eons of time.***

Third is the Day-Age Theory. Adherents to this system suggest the days of Genesis 1 are not calendar days like we experience but actually eons of time that add up to the billions of years in the evolutionary timeframe. They rightly critique the Theistic Evolutionist’s claim that God simply got things going and then stepped back. They say He intervened at each day to further guide the process.

***D. Gap—eons of time fall between Genesis 1.1 and 1.2.***

Fourth is the Gap Theory. The advocates of this theory say the key to the “truth” of the Bible is that eons of time fall *in between* the beginning of Genesis 1.1 and the rest of the account from Genesis 1.2 and on. The days may or may not be calendar days but the key issue is that the long periods of time in the evolutionary timeframe occurred before the days of Genesis.

***E. Framework (aka Schematic Symmetry, Synthetic Parallelism)—Genesis 1 is poetic and Genesis 2 is thematic; neither is intended to teach a chronology or timeframe of origins.***

Fifth is the Framework Hypothesis. They note the order of events in Genesis 1’s days cannot be made to fit with science’s timeline. They also see a conflict between the sequence of events in Genesis 1 and 2. They solve these problems by saying Genesis 2 is the account of creation while Genesis 1 presents a poetic framework that is not intended to teach chronological origins. Instead, it teaches about God’s authority and man’s dominion. So Genesis 1 is a story (they use the word “story” rather than “account”) that makes a true point, but that point is not the order, timeframe, or events of creation.

***F. Analogical/Anthropomorphic—the days of creation are analogous to our days but not really like them in terms of time.***

Sixth is the Analogical Days Theory. In this system the days are God’s workdays of unspecified relation to time as we experience it. For them,

Genesis 1 speaks of God-time while we live in human-time. They broadly affirm the order of events in Genesis 1 and deny there are two contradictory creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2. But they don't think the universe began 5 calendar days before Adam was created.

### ***G. Six Consecutive Contiguous Distinct Calendar Days (aka 6-day Creation).***

The traditional understanding of Genesis goes by many names: 6-day Creation, Young Earth Creation, etc. As I prepared this topic I realized I had to become more and more particular in defining my position. This is because some of the theories agree they were days and some theories agree the events were consecutive. But still they don't mean the same thing as I mean. As with so many things in life, misunderstanding is inevitable unless we define our terms very carefully. Cults are very adept at using orthodox biblical language but meaning by it something very *unorthodox*. So when the Bible says, (Exodus 20.11) "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them" I believe the Bible means Six Consecutive (one following after the other) Contiguous (no gaps in between) Distinct (no overlap) Calendar Days (earth spinning, light and dark, approx 24 hours long, much like what we experience today).

I admit these are brief descriptions and there are many subtleties and variations within each theory. Our brothers in the Lord, ordained ministers in the PCA who hold to Day-Age, Analogical Days, or the Framework Hypothesis still say they agree God created all things, to exhibit his wisdom, goodness and power, out of nothing and very good. They agree God created mankind male and female in his image, without intermediaries, from the dust of the earth. They agree mankind did not evolve from lower creation. I rejoice that our denomination still requires agreement on these points. However, I endeavor to show you that while they claim to, they don't actually pass all these tests. Unless we say the earth is young and mankind was created at the beginning as part of six consecutive contiguous distinct calendar days we are contradicting Scripture and end up undermining the Christian religion.

In the discussion today we will go through what the Bible says about and requires of the creation of the universe. By looking at this we will see whether or not the various theories accurately reflect the witness of Scripture. Next week we will discuss some implications and underpinning issues that flow from these truths. Note again, there are some important

points we agree upon but there are other critical points we do not agree on. And these critical points are *absolutely critical*.

### **III. Biblical Witness**

The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 4 “Of Creation” section 1 says, “It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.” This provides our criteria.

#### **A. Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 4—Of Creation, Section 1.**

##### **1. God created / made—Dt 4.32, Ps 8, Isa 40.26, Amos 4.13, Mark 13.19, Rev 4.11**

The proposition that God is the creator is taught throughout Scripture. It is not just a doctrine of Genesis 1 or 2. It runs from the beginning to the end and every point in-between. Moses said it (Dt 4.32), David said it (Ps 8), the prophets said it (Is 40.26, 43.7; Amos 4.13; Mal 2.10), Jesus said it (Mark 13.19), and the apostles said it (Eph 3.9). God says it at the beginning (Gn 1.1, 6.7) and God says it again at the end (Rev 4.11, 10.6).

Scripture doesn’t just tell us that He created, it tells us about how he created. Notice five more important points:

##### **2. the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible—Ps 89.11, Eph 3.9, Col 1.16**

He created everything. Psalm 89.11: “The heavens *are* Yours, the earth also *is* Yours; The world and all its fullness, You have founded them.” Colossians 1.16: “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” Simply put, Ephesians 3.9: “God created all things.”

##### **3. for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness—Jer 10.12**

And He did it for a purpose, not on a whim or by chance. Jeremiah 10.12: “He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.”

#### **4. of nothing—Heb 11.3**

He did not create the physical world from things that already existed. He created them “out of nothing”. Hebrews 11.3: “the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”

#### **5. in the beginning—Mark 10.6 with 1Cor 15.45**

All this happened in “the beginning”. Genesis 1.1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In Mark 10.6 we read that Jesus said, “from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’” Clearly He placed the creation of man in day 6 at the beginning and in so doing he states a short duration of time between the beginning of the creation in Genesis 1.1 and the creation of man on day 6 in Genesis 1.27<sup>1</sup>. If the earth is old and Adam was not created at approximately the same time as the universe was created, then Jesus is mistaken and is stretching the truth. Old Earth advocates in fact say he is stretching the truth by 13.7 billion years!

#### **6. in the space of six days—Ex 20.11**

The sixth criterion is from the clause, “in the space of six days”. This clause gives a time span for the creation acts. There are several key places in Scripture that reinforce the span of time for creation. We just discussed one. The fact that Adam and Eve were created in the beginning bookends the time frame of chapter 1. If the six days are anything but short it is absurd to say that the events of day six were in the beginning.

Another is Genesis 1.31-2.1: “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.” Here we have a statement that at the end of the sixth day God said the entirety of the created work was complete. The six days that have just been recorded describe the total creation work. The repetition of “heavens and earth” in 1.1 and 2.1 bookend the creation account. Some of it happened on day one, some on day two, some on day three, etc. At the end of the sixth day it was finished. It all happened in the space of six days.

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<sup>1</sup> Just to bolster my implicit statement that the “male and female” of Mark 10.6 are one-in-the same with Adam and Eve of day 6: Scripture tells us that Adam was the first man and Eve the first woman. 1 Corinthians 15.45 quotes Genesis 2.7: “The first man Adam became a living being.” and Genesis 3.20 says Eve “was the mother of all living”. So the Bible states Adam was the first man and all humans descended from him and Eve. When we put this together with Jesus’ words in Mark 10 we see that Adam was the first man, he and Eve are the parents of all living, and they were created at the beginning. There were no humans before them and their creation is in the beginning.

## ***B. Issues to clarify.***

### **1. Meaning of “day” (*yom*).**

Because it is the source of much controversy, one aspect of this last criterion needs to be clarified. We must clarify the meaning of “day”. This word is of the utmost importance in Genesis 1 and 2. The nature of these days is especially prominent in Day-Age, Analogical Day, and Calendar Day interpretations. If it can be proven that the days *are not* calendar days then the implications are significant. Conversely, if it can be shown the days *are* calendar days then the result is decisive.

#### **i. Cardinal numbers and “evening/morning” = calendar day.**

Scripture uses the word day in a variety of ways. It is used two different ways in chapter 1 and a third way at the beginning of chapter 2. 1.5a it is the lighted part of the time span. 1.5b, 1.8, 1.13, 1.19, 1.23, 1.31 it is the period elapsed after the creative acts and an evening / morning. 2.4 it is a collection of time spanning those evening/morning demarcations. Elsewhere it is used to describe an era or multifaceted event (ex. “Day of the Lord”). As always, *context* must determine our understanding of a word so we know whether in a particular situation it means a calendar day or something else.

“Day” occurs 2,225 times in the OT. The overwhelming majority of those uses refer to a normal calendar day. Further, the context of Genesis 1 includes the use of numbers (one, two, etc.) and the phrase “evening and morning”. Throughout the OT *every* use of “day” with ordinal or cardinal numbers is a normal calendar day. The phrase “evening and morning” is employed 30 times outside Genesis and in each it describes a normal calendar day. Also, there is a Hebrew word for “period of indeterminate duration” (*olam*), the type of day these other theories are supposing, and it is not used in Genesis 1.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, the context instructs us that “day” one, two, etc. means a calendar day not an age, era, eon, or “period of unspecified length”. The length is specified by the light/dark, sun/moon, evening/morning. This straightforward word study shows the numerical days of creation are calendar days not ages, metaphors, or analogies.

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<sup>2</sup> For this discussion I relied heavily on Robert L Raymond’s *New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, pp 392-394.

**ii. Nothing about the six Genesis days is contrary to them being calendar days.**

Critics of Calendar Days say that certain details of the creation days don't fit in our calendar-day time so the days cannot be calendar days.

**a. Plenty of time in day 6.**

For example, they say too many things happened on day 6 to fit in a normal calendar day. The land animals were made, man was made, Adam named all the animals, he took a nap, and woman was made. That's a lot to accomplish so calendar day critics say it can't be a calendar day and nor are the others. But is it really too much to fit into one day? Creating the animals could easily have been accomplished in an instant; then God maybe waited a while before creating Adam. Then Adam named the animals. This is not as momentous a task as it might at first seem. Remember 1-Adam did not have to go get the animals (God brought them to him, Gn 2.19)—this is a big time saver. 2-Adam only named the “livestock”, “birds of the air”, and “beasts of the field” (Gn 2.20)—not sea creatures or insects. 3-Adam only named their kinds (for example cat) not species (lynx, lion, tiger, etc.)—so he only had a few thousand to look at. Assuming he named one every five seconds, which isn't all that fast, it would take him less than four hours.<sup>3</sup> Naming the animals could easily have been accomplished by noon! There is plenty of time for Adam to take a good nap before meeting his new wife.

**b. sun and moon conform to “day”, not the other way around.**

Another reason critics say the numerical days cannot be calendar days is that the sun and moon were not created till day 4. They argue, if the sun rules over the day and the moon rules over the night, how could there be a calendar day without them? The answer is that their thinking is backward. Day and night don't fit the sun and moon, rather sun and moon were created to fit the already existing pattern of day and night. According to the description in Genesis 1, our calendar days are what they are *first* because there is light called day and dark called night (1.5), and *then* the sun and moon were made to rule over the day and night that *already* existed (1.18). God expressly says Day is connected to light, not the sun. This is verified elsewhere in Scripture, Revelation 21.23: “the city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it, and the Lamb

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.creationontheweb.com/content/view/2586/>

is its light.” Rather than the presence of light before the creation of the sun causing us trouble, it is perfectly in accord with the Bible.

### **iii. The Sabbath day, seventh in Genesis, is not eternal.**

Another detail affecting the length of the days is the nature of the seventh day in which God rested. We must define what this rest is and how long it happens. Two texts are involved here:

Genesis 2.2 says God ended his work which he had done and rested on the seventh day.

Hebrews 4.3-10 speaks of a believer’s rest in terms of God’s rest from the works of creation on the seventh day. This rest is still ongoing.

Framework and Analogical Days defenders say this is proof that the rest is longer than a calendar day, thus the 7<sup>th</sup> day is longer than a calendar day, thus none of the days in Genesis are calendar days. Are they making justifiable conclusions?

Look again at Genesis 2.2. It says, “He ended the work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day.” The work which he had done was ended, and he rested on that day. Hebrews teaches his rest continues, but does the seventh day continue? No, nowhere does the Bible say the seventh day continues. The seventh day was a specific time when his rest began. Just because His rest continues does not mean the day continues.<sup>4</sup>

Thus we see that the proper understanding of the numerical “days” in Genesis 1 is that they are calendar days. There is every exegetical reason in favor of this view and no exegetical reason to conclude otherwise.

## **2. How to reconcile Genesis 1 and 2?**

There is another stumbling block in Genesis 1-2 that has caused many people to look for other ways to interpret the days and the events. To many people it appears Genesis 1 and 2 give contradictory creation accounts. Some solve this perceived contradiction by saying they are both myth, others say one is a myth and the other is topical not chronological. I think all these “solutions” are misguided.

They miss the mark because they suppose a contradiction. The order of events in Genesis 1 has grass, herbs, and fruit trees brought forth on day 3,

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<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed explanation that the seventh day is not interminably long (though the rest is), see *God's Rest in Hebrews 4:1-11* by Andrew Kulikovsky. As published in *Journal of Creation* 13/2 (1999) 61-62. Available at <http://www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v13/i2/rest.asp>

land animals brought forth/made early day 6, and man made later in day 6. Thus, man was made after plants and animals were made. Genesis 2 seems to say God made man before the plants and animals. Was man created before or after?

A closer look at Genesis 2 gives us the answer. First the plants: Vv 5 and 7 seem to say that man came before plants. The text says “before any plant of the field was in the earth or herb of the field had grown,” ... “God formed man of the dust of the ground”. This could be a contradiction if the “field plants” and “field herbs” of Chapter 2 are one in the same with “grass and herb” of Day 3 Chapter 1 (v11). But is entirely possible that different things are described since “field plants” and “field herbs” (Gn 2) are different Hebrew words than “grass and herb” (Gn 1)—thus the contradiction is removed by the fact that they are speaking of different things. Grass and herb were created before man, on day 3, while field plants and field herbs were created after man on day 6. It is also possible that the “growth” of the field plants and field herbs (2.5) is not the same as them being brought forth/made. I.e. perhaps they are included in the Hebrew words “grass and herb” and thus created day 3 but did not grow till after man was created on day 6. Either way, there is no contradiction and no need to dismiss one of these accounts as myth.

The second supposed problem involves the animals: in v19 the text says, “God formed every beast of the field” and “brought them to Adam” (who was already created). As the New King James reads it does pose a problem. However, the Hebrew verb translated “formed” should more clearly be translated “had formed”. God had *previously* formed every beast of the field and *then* brought them to Adam. Adam indeed was created after the animals who were subsequently brought to him. All together chapter two is chronological. We just need to properly translate the verbs that serve as time indicators.

Thus, we see that there are easy ways to explain what seem to be contradictions so that they are not contradictions at all. With this problem removed, it is entirely reasonable that both Genesis 1 and 2 are chronological creation accounts where Genesis 2 gives more detail of day 6.

#### **IV. Theories Analyzed**

Let’s take a step back and see where we stand. We see that God 1-is the creator, 2-he created everything, 3-he did it to exhibit his attributes, 4-he did

it out of nothing, 5-he did it in the beginning, and 6-he did it in the space of six days—which we clarified are calendar days. Any theory that 1-removes God as creator, 2-limits him to directly creating only some things, 3-diminishes the awesomeness of creation, 4-says he did it from existing materials, 5-puts Adam a long time from the beginning, 6-or did it outside of six calendar days is therefore unbiblical (and anti-confessional).

With this as our biblical criteria let us examine the various theories.

### **A. Naturalistic Evolution fails all 6.**

The two main tenets of Naturalistic Evolution are: 1-“The diversity of life on earth is the outcome of ... an unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable” process. 2-“Natural selection [is] the primary mechanism for changes [and] has no specific direction or goal.”<sup>5</sup> Evolutionists say the existence of God is a myth, they flatly deny God created anything, and they say he has no influence on the world. Clearly this is unbiblical. No person who has read his Bible and had his carnal mind transformed by God could accept their principles. Naturalistic Evolution fails on all six points.

### **B. Theistic Evolution fails #2, 3, 5, 6.**

Theistic Evolution runs up against similar problems. They insert a god but limit god’s action to the forces of natural selection. This is not the description we see in the many biblical uses of the words “create” and “made”. They also say that in time past the world was created *generally* and then it *developed* into what it is now (violates criteria 2). They say providence was used to guide that development, but that is a severe limiting of God’s power (violates criteria 3). Theistic Evolution places emergence of man long after its beginning (violates criteria 5) and fails to confine the period of creation to six days (violates criteria 6).

### **C. Day-Age Theory fails #5 and 6.**

The Day-Age theorists have somewhat better results according to these criteria. They acknowledge God created (ok on criteria 1) and they say He created it all out of nothing via specific acts (ok on criteria 2, 3, and 4). However, this theory falls apart when they get to the timeframe. Their definition of days does not fit the context (violates 6) and even if it were exegetically valid it would force them into error on criteria 5. If the days of creation are defined as eons of time then by definition the sixth day is a long way from the beginning and they fail criteria 5. They cannot have it both ways. Either the days are brief and the six days are close enough to the

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<sup>5</sup> Taken from *The American Biology Teacher*, Jan. 1996, 61-62. This publication informs biology teachers how to teach Evolution.

beginning to be considered “the beginning”, or they are ages afterwards and not in the beginning. So their attempt to satisfy 6 leads them into error on 5.

### **D. Gap Theory fails #2, 5 and 6.**

Recall the Gap Theory says the universe was created, and then the earth was destroyed and remade. The original creation event is described in Genesis 1.1, the result of the destruction is in Genesis 1.2, and the remaking of the earth is in 1.3ff.

According to the criteria they succeed in upholding God as creator and that he created everything by his wisdom and power, perhaps even out of nothing (ok on criteria 1, 2, 3, 4)<sup>6</sup>. By inserting a huge gap in the Genesis account they err with Day-Agers and destroy the compact timeframe that is necessary for day 6 to be at the beginning (violates 5). They say there is another beginning at 1.3 so the close timeframe of the days is preserved. But note the text does not put another beginning there. They are inserting two things: a gap and a second beginning. Also, they have moved the creation of the universe to a period prior the 6 days of creation thus they deny “everything” was created in the space of six days (violates 6).

Their assertions are based on inaccurate exegesis<sup>7</sup> and the result of this inaccuracy is that they violate criteria 2, 5, and 6<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> They may well violate # 4 also. If I understand correctly, they say this second creation was from materials left over from the first creation so they can't say the days of Genesis describe creation out of nothing.

<sup>7</sup> They say, “was” in 1.2a should be translated “became”—“the earth became formless and void”. See <http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v10/i1/gaptheory.asp> They also prefer to translate “fill” in 1.28 to be “fill again”—“be fruitful and multiply; replenish (refill) the earth and subdue it”. Research shows that at the time the King James Version was written the word “replenish” meant “make full, fill, inhabit, settle, occupy.” It comes from the Latin *pleo* meaning filled. It has *re* added to it. We often simplify the meaning of the prefix “re” to be “again” as in “resend the email” or “reapply for the job”. However, this is an incorrect generalization. Linguists note that by the time the Bible was put in Latin the prefix had lost some of that meaning. Many English words today reflect this: “research” = “search completely” not “search again”. Thus, “replenish” is an old-fashioned way of saying “make full” or “fill completely” not “fill again”. (See *What does 'replenish the earth' mean?* Available at [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org).) There is no linguistic or exegetical need to read into these verses a pre-Adamic race that was ruined prior to Genesis 1.

<sup>8</sup> One other aspect of the Ruin/Reconstruction-Gap Theory is that they say the ruin of the earth (in between 1.1 and 1.2) was when Lucifer and his host of angels fell.

Let's establish what we know from Scripture: Satan was created, he was created good, and then he rebelled--Ezekiel 28.15, Neh. 9:6. The angels were likely created before the earth--Job 38.4-7 and Ps 104.4-5. At the end of day 6 "God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good."--Genesis 1.31. So the angels had not sinned prior to the end of day 6, they were still good.

Did Satan's sin occur a long time afterwards? No, apparently it happened soon after God pronounced everything "very good". The word “beginning” gives us the timeframe for Satan’s sin. John 8.44: the devil was a murderer from the beginning. 1 John 3.8: the devil has sinned from the beginning. Just like Jesus puts the creation of man and woman (day 6) close enough to the beginning to be called “from the beginning” (Mk 10.6), Satan’s sin must be close enough to “the beginning” for John to say it was “from the beginning.” If day 6 is not too far from Genesis 1.1 for Jesus to consider it the beginning, day 7 or 8 is not too far from the beginning for it to be the timeframe of Satan’s ejection from Heaven.

This we know: Satan sinned after the six days (per Gn 1.31) but still in the beginning (per John 8.44 and 1Jn 3.8).

### ***E. Framework Hypothesis is non-committal regarding #2, 4, 5, 6.***

In many ways the Framework Hypothesis is an improvement over the other theories. They have accurately perceived the absurdities of making the days sequential eons of time, or in inserting eons of time before the days. But their alternative approach, while avoiding these problems, creates plenty of other problems.

The basic tenet of the Framework Hypothesis is that Genesis 1 is a “poetic” “metaphor... to narrate God’s acts of creation”<sup>9</sup>. They say both Genesis 1 and 2 are topically arranged.<sup>10</sup> They add that God did not create via miracles but solely by providence<sup>11</sup>. They say, since light (Day one) without luminaries (Day four) is not ordinary providence, the six days of creation in Gen 1 must be topical, not sequential.”<sup>12</sup> They say “[Genesis 2.5] presuppose that God’s preservation of the plants during the six days was by normal, secondary causes (water), not by miracle...without rain or a human cultivator, God would not create plants.”<sup>13</sup>

What drives them to these statements is Genesis 2.5: “no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground.” I already dealt with this verse earlier and adequately showed that it does not indicate a contradiction with Chapter 1. Unfortunately, they are assuming the words, “had not sprung up” or “had not grown” are the same as “not created”. But it is not necessarily the same thing as “created”. They could have been created but had not grown yet, because a short period of time had elapsed. Second, they assume that since this facet of the account (field herbs springing up/growing) was dependant on providence, then all of the creation acts were dependant on providence. As I commented earlier, limiting creation to providence violates our third criteria. Next, they say normal providence could not have dried the soaked land between days 2 and 3 so to them it is obvious the days are not calendar days. They created this problem by making creation entirely providential and non-supernatural! If supernatural creation and preservation was at work (and the text sure makes it sound like there was) then there is no problem with the land being rapidly dried and the plants surviving until the mist and man came along a couple of calendar days later.

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<sup>9</sup> PCA study paper, IV.C.Description, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph. Available at <http://www.pcahistory.org/creation/report.html>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, IV.C.Description, argument 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, IV.C.Description, argument 2, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, IV.C.Description, argument 2, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, IV.C.Description, argument 1, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph.

Where does this put the Framework Hypothesis according to the criteria? They pass #1, diminish # 3 to providence instead of special miraculous creation, and their truncated creation account does not [even] answer #2, #4, #5 or #6. This would be a problem except they say Genesis is not intended to teach specifics about origins or sequence. Very convenient.

### **F. Analogical Days fails #2 & #5 and fudges #6.**

Moving on to the Analogical Days Theory I must say I respect it for upholding many truths and pointing out numerous problems in the theories we have already discussed. One of their most prominent authors says there are not two creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2. He defends the “broadly consecutive” nature of the days, and points out numerous problems with the particulars of the Framework Hypothesis<sup>14</sup>. However, their attempted solution is not without problems of its own.

They define the days as “God’s work days which are analogous, and not necessarily identical, to our work days”.<sup>15</sup> The days are “successive periods of unspecified length” which “may overlap, or there may be logical rather than chronological criteria for grouping some events in a particular ‘day’”.<sup>16</sup> Also, in their interpretation vv 1 and 2 of chapter 1 are background, occurring “an unknown length of time prior to the beginning of the first ‘day’”.<sup>17</sup>

According to the criteria they affirm Genesis teaches #1, 3, 4, 6. But by limiting the days of creation to the earth they cannot answer #2<sup>18</sup>. Also, their definition of day is akin to that of Day-Agers so they violate #5.

### **G. Calendar Days affirms all 6.**

The traditional reading of Genesis easily satisfies all six criteria. In this interpretation Genesis 1.1 affirms God is the creator and He created all things out of nothing. The miraculous nature of the events in Genesis 1.2-1.31 exhibits his power and wisdom. Genesis 2.1-2 shows this six-day period was a space of six days in the beginning.

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<sup>14</sup> C. John Collins, *How Old is the Earth; Anthropomorphic Days in Genesis 1:1-2:3*.

<sup>15</sup> PCA study paper, IV.D.2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, IV.D.3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, IV.D.4.

<sup>18</sup> I assume they believe Ps 89.11, Eph 3.9, etc teach God created everything, but one proponent explicitly teaches the days of creation in Genesis 1 do not deal with the cosmos. Collins writes, “It is improper to call Gen 1 a ‘cosmogony’ [description of the origin of the cosmos]; its focus is on the earth as a habitation for humans.” (*Exegetical-theological notes*, manuscript 1996, p 1) However, Day 2 the firmament was made and water was put above it. Day 4 God made the greater light, lesser light, and the stars and put them in the firmament. Thus, there is water in the heaven beyond the stars and the “cosmos” is spoken of in Genesis 1. (Note this description of water in heaven is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture: Ezekiel 1.22 and Revelation 4.6.)

## V. Conclusion

Today we covered a lot of ground as I endeavored to inform you of the most prominent interpretations of Genesis 1 and 2. This is necessary for us to be able to examine them in the light of Scripture and interact with people out in the world. Having examined them in the light of Scripture we see that all but the Calendar Day view are found wanting.

So we have answered the question, “Which view represents the Bible’s teaching on creation?” But this does not necessarily answer my initial question, “Why does it matter?” Why does it matter that God is the creator? Why does it matter that he created everything? Why does it matter that he did it out of nothing at the beginning in the space of six days? It matters a lot.

We’ve seen that Scripture presents a unified witness. God has confirmed his word in Genesis in various *other* places in Scripture so we can be confident that the Bible is a cohesive whole and Genesis 1-2 really does speak of origins, events that transpired not all that long ago.

So the doctrine of creation matters because every jot and tittle matters. Reinterpreting Genesis leads to either contradicting other Scripture or reinterpreting other Scripture. When people attack the creation account they are not just attacking a story written down by Moses. They are attacking the words inspired by God and believed by the saints throughout the ages and testified to by our Lord Jesus himself. Every single detail is important and none can be ignored.

God does have answers and he has graciously given them to us. He gives them to us in the Bible, if we will but read it and accept it. He gives us The Answer in His son who died to reconcile the fallen creation and restore it to its Edenic glory, if we will but confess and believe.

# Why does the Doctrine of Creation Matter?

Dominion Covenant Church

Mike Elliott

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## I. Introduction

- A. What is at stake here?
  - 1. It is not just a theoretical or intellectual debate.
  - 2. Ideas have consequences.

## II. Overview of the theories

- A. Naturalistic Evolution—random mutations exposed to natural forces lead to greater diversity and complexity; ultimately complex life developed from pre-existent non-living matter.
- B. Theistic Evolution—“Evolution” plus god.
- C. Day-Age—the “days” of Genesis 1 are eons of time.
- D. Gap—eons of time fall between Genesis 1.1 and 1.2.
- E. Framework (aka Schematic Symmetry, Synthetic Parallelism)—Genesis 1 is poetic and Genesis 2 is thematic; neither is intended to teach a chronology or timeframe of origins.
- F. Analogical/Anthropomorphic—the days of creation are analogous to our days but not really like them in terms of time.
- G. Six Consecutive Contiguous Distinct Calendar Days (aka 6-day Creation).

## III. Biblical Witness

- A. Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 4—Of Creation, Section 1.
  - 1. God created / made—Dt 4.32, Ps 8, Isa 40.26, Amos 4.13, Mark 13.19, Rev 4.11
  - 2. the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible—Ps 89.11, Eph 3.9, Col 1.16
  - 3. for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness—Jer 10.12
  - 4. of nothing—Heb 11.3
  - 5. in the beginning—Mark 10.6 with 1Cor 15.45
  - 6. in the space of six days—Ex 20.11
- B. Issues to clarify.
  - 1. Meaning of “day” (*yom*).
    - i. Cardinal numbers and “evening/morning” = calendar day.
    - ii. Nothing about the six Genesis days is contrary to them being calendar days.
    - iii. The Sabbath day, seventh in Genesis, is not eternal.
  - 2. How to reconcile Genesis 1 and 2?

## IV. Theories Analyzed

	1-God is the creator	2-of everything	3-to exhibit his attributes	4-out of nothing	5-in the beginning	6-in the space of six days.
Naturalistic Evolution						
Theistic Evolution						
Day-Age						
Gap						
Framework						
Analogical Day						
Calendar Day						

## V. Conclusion