

Why Six Days?

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One of the greatest controversies among Christians who believe that God has created the universe and everything in it, is the matter of how long it took for God to accomplish that feat: I.e the question concerning the length of the days that are discussed in the first chapter of Genesis. Some insist that they are literally 24 hours long (I am numbered among those) and some aver an indefinite span of time, possibly millions or billions of years. Those who favor the latter interpretation don't really commit to a specific length of time. I have a very good friend, a man of letters, a virtual leader in the evangelical community of faith, and a man that I deeply love and respect, who is a prolific writer, who is widely read and who has recently written that he believes that it borders on cultist to insist that the days in Genesis chapter one are literally 24 hours in length. To that I respectfully take great exception.

What difference does it make how long God took to do what He has said that He did in the first two chapters of Genesis? As far as I am concerned, if God had revealed to us that He had taken six nanoseconds to complete the entire spectrum of creation, I would believe that He had taken just exactly that amount of time. If He had said that it had required Him millions or billions of years to accomplish the creative acts, I would have believed that too. The simple truth is that He has used the Hebrew word *yom* to indicate the six spans of time that He took to accomplish that which He has revealed that He did. While *yom*, when used throughout Scripture can also mean an indefinite period of time, in over 85% of the instances it refers to a literal 24 hour day. I believe that the *yom* spoken of in Genesis chapter one teaches a 24 hour span of time.

Jonah is said to have been in the belly of a great fish for three days and three nights, and Jesus reiterated in Matthew 12:40 exactly what the book of Jonah had said about that time span. Are we to dismiss that as an indefinite period of time? What about the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert (Matthew 4:2) before Satan tested Him? What are we to believe concerning the 8 days that Abraham and all other Jews were to wait before circumcising their sons; Genesis 17:12? Was Jesus really in the grave (in Hell) for three days? The list of allusions to 24 hour days could go on *ad nauseum*, and yet while most believers would insist that each of those lengths of time was based on literal, 24 hour days, some of them would not insist the same for the six, 24 hour long days of creation. In point of fact they would vehemently argue against it.

When God gave Moses the Decalogue, He included a statement on creation. It almost seemed a non-sequitur at the time since He was actually speaking about worship and work in that particular commandment. However, in the midst of commanding the fourth of His ten specifically absolute, divine edicts, God said this:

*"Remember the Sabbath **Day**, to keep it holy. Six **days** you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh **day** is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For **in six days** the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh **day**. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath **day** and hallowed it.* (Exodus 20:8-11, NKJV-emphasis mine)

It is not even logical to think that God would speak of a literal 24 hour Sabbath day, followed by six literal 24 hour work days, and then claim to have created the universe in six indefinite spans of time, all the while returning to discuss a literal 24 hour Sabbath day that He had sovereignly hallowed. If He was using metaphors there, they are certainly mixed. If He was simply making a statement it lacks syntax; as my English composition professor at Hiram College would have promptly told me, had I composed that paragraph. God repeats the exact same teaching in Exodus 31:17.

Consider this, God put a spin on the earth at such a revolutionary speed as to give us a 24 hour day; one revolution per 24 hours. He placed the moon in orbit around the earth in order to give us a 29.5 day month; I.e a "new moon" every 29.5 days. He put the earth in an orbital motion around the sun such that we have a 365 day calendar year. However, no geological or cosmic system of motion accounts for our seven day week other than the six days during which God created and the seventh during which He rested. That I believe is why God took six, literal 24 hour days instead of six nanoseconds to create the universe, and that is why, an infinitely omnipotent God who needs no rest, did in fact rest on the seventh day.

Another hermeneutic proof of a literal six day creation is found in the repetitive nature of the naming of the six days of creation. God said over and over, *"so the evening and the morning were"* and then that statement was followed by, *the first day, the second day, the third day, the fourth day, the fifth day, the sixth day*. Each found in the NKJV Genesis chapter one. Then in the first verse of Genesis chapter two one finds this statement, *"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done."*

It is axiomatic and without question, that there is only one span of time which contains an

evening and a morning; a 24 hour day. If God had meant to imply an indefinite period of time, as some would have us believe, He would not have dictated to Moses, via the Holy Spirit, repetitive statements about dawn and dusk. He would rather have said something like, "When the first millennium had ended, God began anew to create" thus and so. Furthermore, when a Hebrew says something twice he raises its importance to the comparative. When repeating it a third time the superlative point is made. Here God has multiplied the superlative by two in regard to the days during which He created the universe.

Another problem arises for those who would opine an indefinite span of time between the days of creation, and that has to do with the mutual necessity that exists between the sun and the earth's vegetation. The sun is the earth's lone source of energy. The plants are the only created matter which have the capacity to trap that ultraviolet energy; via photosynthesis. Animals and man do not have that capability and thus they rely upon plants, or other creatures that eat plants, for their energy supply. Ergo, the sun relies on the plants to make its energy useful to all living creatures, and the plants in turn are utterly dependant upon the sun for their livelihood. They are thus mutually dependant upon one another.

The text tells us that God placed the sun in the universe on the fourth day of creation (Genesis 1:14-16). On day three God had caused the plants to grow on the earth's surface (Genesis 1:11-12). If, as the skeptic would have us believe, the plants were on the earth for an indefinite period of time without the sun, they would not have survived. To prove the point, just go into your yard, turn a water bucket upside down, leave it there for one week and when you return to the spot, see if the grass is still green where the bucket had been inverted; we all know by experience that it will be brown. On days five and six, God placed the animals and man on planet earth, now that they had an energy source. For the next sixteen hundreds of years man and the animals would be strict vegetarians. Not until the great flood was over would man and the animals become carnivorous. (See Genesis 1:29-30; Genesis 9:1-3)

Those who opt for a long span of time for each of the *yom* spans of creation are basically theistic evolutionists, or day age creationists, who want to acquiesce to the unproven theory of evolution and interject God for chance in the evolutionary equation of origins: Time + Matter + Chance (or God for the theist) = the cosmos. These people are I believe, for the most part, devout Christians who hold firm convictions about the Trinity, the deity of Christ, His perfect life, His vicarious death for our sins, our justification by faith alone, Christ's bodily resurrection and His imminent return. They are also, for the most part,

committed to the verbal, plenary inspiration, inerrant nature and infallibility of God's Word. That is why I find it so hard to understand their position on the six days of creation.

In his letter to the church in Rome, the apostle Paul wrote this, "*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus sin spread to all men, because all sinned...*" (Romans 5:12, NKJV) Note the sequence; first there was man (Adam), then came sin (the fall), and as a result of that sin came death (Genesis 2:16-17). In the evolutionary scenario (theistic or atheistic) death upon death (random mutations and natural selection, the survival of the fittest) over millions upon millions of years preceded the first appearance of man. Thus death had nothing whatsoever to do with Adam's sin. If we are going to jettison Genesis chapter one, we will have to jettison Romans chapter five as well. And while we are at it, we had better get rid of this verse as well, "*For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.*" (I Corinthians 15:12, NKJV) The "man" was Adam, and the "Man" (large case M) was Jesus Christ. By Adam came death through sin; that's the bad news. However, by Jesus Christ comes eternal life by grace through faith; that's the gospel, the "good news." When we jettison the six days, we cast aside the resurrection and Gospel as well.

In discussing general (I.e natural) revelation, the apostle Paul instructs his readers in the Roman church concerning creation and its observable testimony to the power of God. His statement reads in part, "*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power...*" (Romans 1:20) In essence, Paul was saying, look around and you will find strong, irrefutable evidence that God is (He exists) and that He is an infinitely powerful God. Look at the evidence in the complexity and design of nature. God is powerful enough to have created the entire universe in whatever time frame He sovereignly decided to use, but in His sovereign, omniscient will He decided on the explicit span of time that He chose to reveal to us in His special revelation to believers, the Holy Bible.

To paraphrase a statement plagiarized and made famous by Robert Kennedy but which had actually originated with another person I would simply say, "Some people see six days in Genesis and ask, 'why?' I see six days in Genesis and ask, 'Why Not?'"

I know the answer to that question. Some Christians are convinced that the scientific community has proven the theory of evolution, but they have bought into a lie. I can show whom ever wishes to discuss and debate the point that the theory of evolution is not even close to being proven and I can do it without ever bringing the notion of God or the Bible into the discussion. There is a way to debate the question of our origins in the classroom

without ever pointing to the Bible. One does not have to dispense with the teaching of evolution, but one must be permitted to look at the alternative theory (Intelligent Design) along side. There is a way to convince young and old alike that this universe and everything in it is the result of an intricate design. Furthermore, when one examines the order and complexity of the designs, one can only conclude that they are the result of an infinitely intelligent being. They will then be able to draw their own conclusions, based on a sense of reason, as to just Who that designer is.

In a dialectical discussion one has the thesis and the antithesis; a revealed truth and its opposite. For example, my thesis is that God exists, yours may be that God does not exist; the antithesis to my thesis. The synthesis is a compromise. For me He exists, for you He does not. Thus we are both right. That seemingly flies in the face of reason, but not in a post-modern world of relativism.

To accept anything other than a six day period of creation is a form of synthesis and a position that is compatible with the age of relativism. I say, God is a creator and He made the entire universe in six days; the thesis. The atheist says there is no God and the universe evolved over a period of 15 billion years by means of explosions, mutations and natural selection; the antithesis. The theistic evolutionist or day/age creationist proposes a compromise and says God exists but He created the universe by means of evolutionary processes over a period of 15 billion years; the synthesis. Incidentally, it was this very kind of dialectic upon which communism was built by Lenin; it's called dialectic materialism.

Soli deo Gloria