

# Does Genesis 1 Describe a Young Creation?

**By Dr. Marco Kletting**

**Submitted to Dr. Robert Price**  
Christian Thought I  
**Biola University**  
**December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

# 1. Objections

## 1.1. Objection 1

While there are several possibilities for translating the Hebrew word *yom*, there are several reasons to translate it as 24-hour day for the six creation days in Genesis 1. For example, Young Earth Creationist Ken Ham argues that

the days are numbered (first, second, third, etc.), and each is preceded by the refrain “and there was evening (‘*ereb*), and there was morning (*boqer*).” Every other place in the Old Testament where *yom* is modified by a number it always means a literal twenty-four-hour day. And every other use of *laylah*, ‘*ereb*, and *boqer* refers to a literal night or literal evening or literal morning, respectively, of a literal day.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the creation took not millions of years but 6 literal days.

## 1.2. Objection 2

Exodus 20:8–11 explains that the Israelites should work for six days and rest on the seventh. This also supports a reading of Genesis 1 with literal 24-hour days. According to Ken Ham

Verse 11 verse stands as an insurmountable brick wall against any attempt to add millions of years into Genesis 1. They can’t be inserted into each of the days or between the days or before the days, for the verse says “in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.”<sup>2</sup>

## 1.3. Objection 3

The Bible teaches that death was introduced by Adam’s disobedience (see e.g. Romans 5:12). Moreover, the Bible teaches that God cursed the ground after Adams’s sin (Gen 3:17, Gen 5:29) and the whole creation was affected by that curse according to Romans 8:18-25.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> James B. Stump, ed., *Four Views on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 20.

<sup>2</sup> Stump, 21-22.

<sup>3</sup> Stump, 21-22.

According to Dr. Terry Mortenson

to accept millions of years of animal death before the creation and Fall of man contradicts and destroys the Bible's teaching on death and the full redemptive work of Christ. It also makes God into a bumbling, cruel creator who uses (or can't prevent) disease, natural disasters, and extinctions to mar His creative work, without any moral cause, but still calls it all "very good."<sup>4</sup>

## 2. The Right Answer

In the following I will show that a faithful reading of Scripture does not necessarily imply Young Earth Creationism (YEC), i.e. the view that God created everything within six 24-hour days.

There have been different proposals regarding the genre of the Genesis creation account.<sup>5</sup> The genre is crucial for proper interpretation. Genre proposals are (the list is not conclusive):

- History<sup>6</sup>
- Poetic narrative
- Didactic poem
- Mytho History<sup>7</sup>
- Near Eastern polemic<sup>8</sup>
- A mixture of any of several points above.

Even a historical genre does not necessarily imply YEC. Besides YEC there are other views held by Christian scholars who consider Genesis 1 as an historical account of events

---

<sup>4</sup> Terry Mortenson, "Why Shouldn't Christians Accept Millions of Years?," August 16, 2007, <https://answersingenesis.org/theory-of-evolution/millions-of-years/why-shouldnt-christians-accept-millions-of-years>.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce Riley Ashford and Craig G. Bartholomew, *The Doctrine of Creation: A Constructive Kuyperian Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 144-146.

<sup>6</sup> See for example, Stump, 71-100; Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days: Resolving a Creation Controversy*, 2nd expanded ed. (Covina, CA: Reasons to Believe Press, 2015), Kindle.

<sup>7</sup> See for example, William Lane Craig, *In Quest of the Historical Adam: A Biblical and Scientific Exploration*, Kindle edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021), 65-236

<sup>8</sup> See for example, John D. Currid, *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament*, Kindle edition (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013).

which really happened. For example, Old Earth Creationism (OEC) holds that God created everything over several longer periods of time. And within OEC different views are defended. Christian scientist and astronomer Huger Ross lists seven different views<sup>9</sup> and even this list is not complete.<sup>10</sup> Ross, who believes that the Bible is the supreme authority, argues for the day age view.<sup>11</sup> According to Ross “the day-age view considers the creation days as six sequential, non-overlapping, long time periods.”<sup>12</sup> Here, the Hebrew word *yom* is translated as a long yet finite period of time, which is one of the literal definition of *yom* in biblical Hebrew,<sup>13</sup> instead of 24-hours day.<sup>14</sup>

There is also additional evidence from the text which indicate that the days were longer than 24 hours. For example, all the events which occurred on day six (Gen 2:9; 2:19; 2:21-23) are a lot to occur within one 24-hour day. Moreover, the 7<sup>th</sup> day when Gods rests is open ended (Gen 2:1-3; Heb 4:4-11). In addition, the word *yom* is already used for a time period in Genesis 2:4 where it refers to the whole creation week.

In addition, Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 can mean that God has a different time frame than humans.

YEC faces the difficulty how the days are measured before God created the sun on day 4 and what kind of light is implied by “Let there be light.” OEC usually holds that sun, moon and stars are created either before day one or on the first day. Considering the vantage point of the narrator on the dark Earth (Gen 1:2), Hugh Ross argues that “Let there be Light” refers to the time when the atmosphere was transformed from densely dark to overcast.<sup>15</sup> Thus, light

---

<sup>9</sup> Stump, 72.

<sup>10</sup> For example, the Prophetic day view defended in „ Benjamin D. Smith, *Genesis, Science, and the Beginning: Evaluating Interpretations of Genesis One on the Age of the Earth* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2018),“ is not included in this list.

<sup>11</sup> James B. Stump, 71-100; Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days: Resolving a Creation Controversy*, 2nd expanded ed. (Covina, CA: Reasons to Believe Press, 2015), Kindle.

<sup>12</sup> Stump, 72.

<sup>13</sup> Stump, 72.; James A. Swanson, *A Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>14</sup> Stump, 73.

<sup>15</sup> Ross, *A Matter of Days*, 315-316.

could penetrate the atmosphere, but the sun, moon and stars could still not be seen. Regarding the fourth day, the atmosphere transformed from translucent to transparent and the heavenly bodies became visible.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, John Collins argues that the verb “made” used in v16 can be understood as „working on something is already there.”<sup>17</sup> He also argues, that v14 focuses on the functions of the lights and not their origin.<sup>18</sup>

The day age view is also preferred by some prominent evangelical theologians like Millard Erickson<sup>19</sup> or evangelical Old Testament scholars like Gleason Archer<sup>20</sup>. After assessing several views Erickson concludes:

All of these views have points of strength, and each has some difficulties as well. We must find the one that has more strengths and fewer difficulties than do the alternative views. At present, the view that I find most satisfactory is a variation of the age-day theory.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, one can argue that Genesis 1:1-2 is not part of day but describes the initial creation of the universe and that some time passed until the first creation day.<sup>22</sup> One reason for that is that all six days follow the pattern “God said” at the beginning and “there was evening and there was morning: n-th day” at the end. But verses 1:1-2 are before the first “God said”. Also, in the Hebrew text the word "created" is in the perfect tense. OT scholar John Collins argues that:

In 1:1 we have an adverbial (“in the beginning”) that opens the verse, and the clause’s verb is in the perfect tense form (bara’, “created”). In such cases the clause designates a background action that took place before the main storyline got under way.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Ross, 316.

<sup>17</sup> C. John Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006), 56-58.

<sup>18</sup> Collins, 56-58.

<sup>19</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*. 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 352.

<sup>20</sup> Gleason Archer Jr., *A survey of Old Testament introduction*, 3rd. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 199–201.

<sup>21</sup> Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 352

<sup>22</sup> Collins, Genesis 1–4, 51.

<sup>23</sup> C. John Collins, *Reading Genesis Well: Navigating History, Poetry, Science, and Truth in Genesis 1–11*, Kindle edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2018), 161.

While it is not clear from the text how much time occurred between Genesis 1:1-2 and day 1, even if with 24-hour creation days this would still make an old creation possible because there could be any duration of time between Genesis 1:1-2 and day 1.

There is also strong scientific evidence that the universe is old.<sup>24</sup> One of the most compelling evidence against a young creation is the fact that it takes billions of years for light to reach the Earth from a galaxy which is billions of years away. To argue that the light has been created on the way leads to the odd conclusion that events like super nova explosions millions of light years away never really happened<sup>25</sup> when we observe them today, because God would have to create this information within the light beam at creation around 6000 light years of distance from the Earth in order to reach us when the universe were only 6000 years old. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

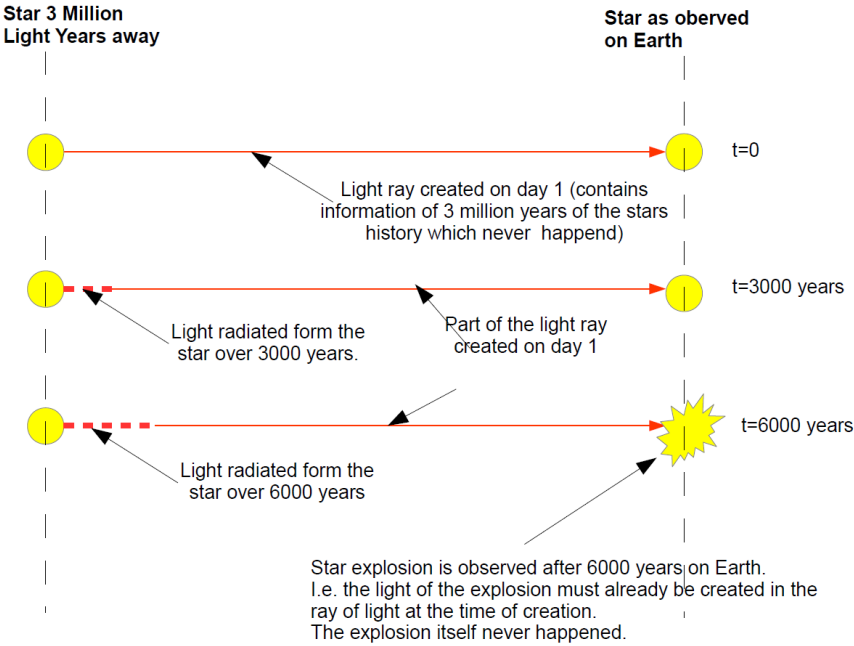


Figure 1: Creation of Light “on the way” and its implications.

<sup>24</sup> Robert C. Newman, Perry G. Phillips, and Herman J. Eckelmann, Jr., *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth*, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Institute for Creation Research, 2012), 25pp., 47-58, 63, 205 pp.

<sup>25</sup> D. Russell Humphreys, *Starlight and Time: Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1996), 43-45.

There have been responses to the scientific evidence from the YEC community<sup>26</sup> and while scientific consensus does not dictate truth one has to acknowledge the fact that also many Bible believing scientists think that considering the scientific evidence a young creation is not tenable.

There is a historical precedent where new scientific evidence led to an overturn of the interpretation of certain biblical passages. For example, Pre-Copernican astronomy held to a geo-centric view of the universe with the Earth at its centre and the sun, moon, planets and stars revolving around a fixed Earth. When this view was overturned by discoveries in the 16th and 17th century,<sup>27</sup> it was recognized that the biblical passage who seemed to support a fixed Earth (e.g., Ps 93:1) can also easily interpreted in a figurative sense.

If the Genesis is compatible with an old creation and good Hebrew scholars disagree on the length of the days in Genesis 1, why not allow science help to decide which interpretations are viable.

### 3. Correcting the Wrong Answer

#### 3.1. Reply to Objection 1

Just having a number together with *yom* does not necessitate that *yom* means a 24-hour day. There are also counter examples in the Bible (Hos 6:2, Zech 14:7). While Hosea 6:2 can be seen as a messianic prophecy, the historical context is about the restoration of Israel,<sup>28</sup> which implies that the usage of *yom* in that passage was not intended to be understood as

---

<sup>26</sup> See Jason Lisle, “*The Physics of Einstein: Black Holes, Time Travel, Distant Starlight, E=mc<sup>2</sup>*, Kindle edition (Green Forest, AR: Biblical Science Institute, 2018), chap. 17&18“ for a recent attempt to solve the issue of light travel time.

<sup>27</sup> John C. Lennox, *Seven Days That Divide the World, 10th Anniversary Edition: The Beginning According to Genesis and Science*, 10th Anniversary edition, Kindle edition (Grand Rapid, MI: Zondervan, 2021), 7-34

<sup>28</sup> Duane A. Garrett, Hosea, Joel, Bd. 19A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 158–159.

literal 24-hour days. And even when there would be no counter example, this does not necessitate 24-hour days if other arguments would work against this interpretation.

Regarding the claim that the pattern of an “evening” and a “morning,” requires 24 hour days, it can be argued that they also can refer to the ending of one period and the starting of another one.<sup>29</sup> For example, Gleason Archer argues “that the formula “evening and morning” serves only to indicate that the term day, albeit symbolical for a geological stage, is used in the sense of a twenty-four-hour cycle rather than “day” in contrast to “night” (as, for example, day is used in 1:5a).”<sup>30</sup> And a 24-hour day with beginning and ending serves as a better symbol for a creation stage than daylight.

### 3.2. Reply to Objection 2

An analogical understanding of Exodus 20:8-11 as a pattern for a work week is better than a literal one, because while there are similarities between the creation week and the human work week there are also big differences:

- The creation week happened only once.
- God still rests from creation.
- God does not rest because he is tired.

Regarding the argument that Exodus 20:11 precludes a time gap between Genesis 1:1-2 and day 1 it can be argued that the Hebrew word for “made” *asah* in v11 and that v11 might not include the initial creative act where the word “bara” is used but that it can also be understood as God modifying or further perfect the things he already had created during the six days.<sup>31</sup> Also, Genesis 1:1-2 should be understood in its own terms. Since the case for a

---

<sup>29</sup> Stump, *Four Views on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design*; 82; Ross, *Am Matter of Days*, 88; Archer, *A survey of Old Testament introduction*, 201.

<sup>30</sup> Archer, *A survey of Old Testament introduction*, 201.

<sup>31</sup> Rodney Whitefield, *Reading Genesis One: Comparing Biblical Hebrew with English Translation* (San Jose, CA: R. Whitefield Publisher, 2003), 28-32.

time gap in Genesis 1:1-2 is quite strong, this should influence the interpretation of Exodus 20:11 and not vice versa.

### 3.3. Reply to Objection 3

Romans 5:12 refers to human and not to animal death as consequence of the fall. And when God declares to be “very good” this does not imply perfection, because only God is perfect. It means that creation serves the purpose for which God has created it.<sup>32</sup>

It is also implausible that the curse changed the whole creation. Genesis 3:17 just refers to the ground. Moreover, Genesis 3:17 says “Cursed is the ground **because of you**” (NIV). Thus, what changed was not the physical universe but due to sin also changed the relationship between humans and the environment. Thus, the ground was cursed indirectly when Adam and Eve sinned.<sup>33</sup> Throughout the Bible there are examples where human actions are at the same time a judgment by God (e.g. when the Assyrians conquered the Northern tribes). Moreover, the garden was in Eden, which is not equivalent to the whole Earth. Thus, the environmental conditions outside the garden might have been different from the beginning and when Adam and Eve were kicked out of the garden they had to deal with this. Now they must work the ground on their own without being in a close relationship with God.

The claim that Romans 8:18-25 means that the curse in Genesis altered the whole creation can also be challenged. For example, John Collins argues that the term used in Genesis used for “curse” should not be understood as a change in the laws of nature.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, according to Hug Ross “bondage to decay” (Rom 8:21, NIV) is “an apt description of the second law of thermodynamics”<sup>35</sup>. And while this law is important in the current

---

<sup>32</sup> Mark S. Whorton, *Peril in Paradise: Theology, Science, and the Age of the Earth*, Kindle edition (Waynesboro, GA: Master Books, 2005), position 282 pp.

<sup>33</sup> Whorton, *Peril in Paradise*, 1940.

<sup>34</sup> John. *Reading Genesis Well*, 236-237.

<sup>35</sup> Ross, *A Matter of Days*, 88.

creation for life,<sup>36</sup> Hugh Ross argues that the new creation will have different physics and that „, there will be no second law of thermodynamics (decay) and thus no gravity or electromagnetism in the new creation.“<sup>37</sup>

Nature works is in a delicate balance.<sup>38</sup> For example, earthquakes are also often seen as the consequences of the fall, but earthquakes are the consequence of plate tectonics and plate tectonics is important for the existence of life.<sup>39</sup> There is also a fine balance in our ecosystem between herbivores and.<sup>40</sup> If the curse altered the whole animal kingdom this would have required a hyper evolution of which not even the strongest proponents of Evolution could dream of. We also need to be careful not to anthropomorphize animals. Humans and (most) animals have different levels of experiencing pain.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Ross, 129-130

<sup>37</sup> Ross, 108.

<sup>38</sup> See “Hugh Ross, *Why the Universe Is the Way It Is* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008)” for an OEC perspective why God created the world as he did.

<sup>39</sup> Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards, *The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos Is Designed for Discovery, 20th Anniversary* ed. (Washington, D.C.: Gateway Editions, 2024), 41 pp

<sup>40</sup>[https://reasons.org/explore/publications/pub\\_channel/why-did-god-make-animals-to-be-so-violent](https://reasons.org/explore/publications/pub_channel/why-did-god-make-animals-to-be-so-violent)

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/question-answer/animal-suffering-1>

## Works Cited

- Archer, Gleason L. Jr. *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. 3rd ed. Chicago: Moody Press, 1994.
- Ashford, Bruce Riley, and Craig G. Bartholomew. *The Doctrine of Creation: A Constructive Kuyperian Approach*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020.
- Collins, C. John. *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006.
- Collins, C. John. *Reading Genesis Well: Navigating History, Poetry, Science, and Truth in Genesis 1–11*. Kindle edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2018.
- Craig, William Lane. *In Quest of the Historical Adam: A Biblical and Scientific Exploration*. Kindle edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021.
- Currid, John D. *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament*. Kindle edition. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.
- Garrett, Duane A. *Hosea, Joel. Vol. 19A, The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997.
- Gonzalez, Guillermo, and Jay W. Richards. *The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos Is Designed for Discovery*. 20th Anniversary ed. Washington, D.C.: Gateway Editions, 2024.
- Humphreys, D. Russell. *Starlight and Time: Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1996.
- Lennox, John C. *Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning According to Genesis and Science*. 10th Anniversary ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021.
- Lisle, Jason. *The Physics of Einstein: Black Holes, Time Travel, Distant Starlight, E=mc<sup>2</sup>*. Green Forest, AR: Biblical Science Institute, 2018. Kindle.
- Newman, Robert C., Perry G. Phillips, and Herman J. Eckelmann, Jr. *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth*. 2nd ed. Berrien Springs, MI: Institute for Creation Research, 2012.
- Ross, Hugh. *A Matter of Days: Resolving a Creation Controversy*. 2nd expanded ed. Covina, CA: Reasons to Believe Press, 2015. Kindle.
- Ross, Hugh. *Why the Universe Is the Way It Is*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008.
- Smith, Benjamin D. *Genesis, Science, and the Beginning: Evaluating Interpretations of Genesis One on the Age of the Earth*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2018.
- Stump, James B., ed. *Four Views on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017.

Whitefield, Rodney. *Reading Genesis One: Comparing Biblical Hebrew with English Translation*. San Jose, CA: R. Whitefield Publisher, 2003.

Whorton, Mark S. *Peril in Paradise: Theology, Science, and the Age of the Earth*. Waynesboro, GA: Master Books, 2005. Turabian Footnotes

## Websites Cited

<https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/question-answer/animal-suffering-1>

[https://reasons.org/explore/publications/pub\\_channel/why-did-god-make-animals-to-be-so-violent](https://reasons.org/explore/publications/pub_channel/why-did-god-make-animals-to-be-so-violent)

<https://answersingenesis.org/theory-of-evolution/millions-of-years/why-shouldnt-christians-accept-millions-of-years>