

*Did God Create*  
**in Six Days?**



Second Edition

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# Introduction

In the church today, we see a number of approaches to the days of creation recorded in Genesis 1. Some say that they were literal, approximately 24-hour days. Others take them to be long periods of time during which the great epochs of evolutionary history occurred. Others believe that they were 24 hours each, but they also insert a long gap to account for the vast ages of secular geology. And still others treat the entire account as nothing more than poetry, insisting that Genesis has nothing to do with when or how God created the world.

But which of these views is correct? How can we determine if the six days of creation were actual days or something else? And is it really all that important of an issue?

This pocket guide will answer these questions and more. We'll examine the words of Jesus himself and explore the views of Paul and other biblical authors. We'll see that what we believe about the length of the creation days affects a host of other issues, such as our view of Scripture and God's character.

Since the Bible is God's inspired, inerrant Word, we can trust it to give us clear information about the past.



# Genesis—Scripture Interprets Scripture

by Ken Ham

As we think about the conflict between man’s fallible ideas on our origins (evolution and/or millions of years), it is important to answer questions like these: Could God have created in six days? Did the entire human race descend from a single couple? Was there a literal fall? Was the flood of Noah’s day a real, global event? Now, we can look to the evidence to see if it confirms the scriptural account—and it certainly does!—but I think it is paramount that we understand how to read Scripture on its own terms first.

Many people today have not been trained in proper, biblical apologetics. As a result, they doubt the truth of the Scriptures and walk away from the church (as has been well documented in Ken Ham’s book co-authored with Britt Beemer called *Already Gone*). And while apologetics training should happen primarily in the home, the church plays a role in that as well. But sadly, the church is falling down in this area.

Not long ago, I came across a book written by Martin Thielen, a senior pastor in a United Methodist Church, titled *What’s the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?* The title says it all, doesn’t it? Now, I am sure this man loves the Lord and is sincere in his efforts to share the gospel with people. He writes that people “need to believe in Jesus—his life, teachings, example, death, and resurrection.”<sup>1</sup> However, his book gives the entirely wrong impression about some very important issues.

He deals with biblical creation early, writing that while he respects creationists, biblical creation “has scientific problems. It denies virtually every branch of science.”<sup>2</sup> He continues, “Not only does this literalist approach have scientific problems; it also has biblical problems. Contrary to what this view teaches, the Bible is not a science book.”<sup>3</sup> Of course, I completely acknowledge that the Bible is not a science book in the sense of operational science—but it is a history book—a book of historical science! And as a history book, it tells us exactly how the universe came to be: God spoke it into existence.

But Pastor Thielen disagrees, writing, “Theistic evolution is a perfectly acceptable Christian belief.”<sup>4</sup> And he keeps his own position on the matter no secret:

Yes, I believe in creationism. And yes, I believe in evolution. I believe God created the world, but I believe God created through evolution.<sup>5</sup>

Thielen is the pastor of a church, shepherding believers as they grow (hopefully) into spiritual maturity. Wittingly or not, this shepherd is leading the sheep astray. What’s worse is that Thielen is only one of many Christian leaders who have compromised on Genesis. We are truly facing an epidemic in our churches and Christian colleges and universities.

After reading such statements of compromise, the words of Jude often echo in my head: “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). We need Christian men and women today who are prepared to be bold and unashamed of God’s Word and the gospel. We need Christian men and women who are prepared to contend for the faith in this increasingly secularized culture and church.



## The Creation Account on Its Own Terms

The way Scripture is intended to be read and understood is by reading it in its most natural sense and by allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture. When people perform exegesis, they are looking at Scripture and attempting to flesh out meaning based on the plain words, the genre, the context, other scriptural references, and so on. They are not necessarily trying to force their own views on the text—and certainly should not be.

But readers who commit *eisegesis* look at Scripture and use their own preconceived ideas, and ideas outside of Scripture, such as evolution and millions of years, to try to determine its meaning. Rather than finding biblically sound answers to their questions, these people end up twisting the words of the Bible to fit their own worldviews. Their starting point is not God's Word; it is man's word.

I want to equip readers to deal with the rampant compromise on Genesis across Christendom. First, I will summarize the argument concerning the literal days of creation then I will answer in detail some of the objections leveled at this position. This will help readers to be more fully equipped to defend a literal Genesis.

So, how should we read Genesis 1 using a proper approach to Scripture? Well, it is helpful to understand the definition of the Hebrew word for day, *yôm*. *Yôm* can have a few different definitions based on context, but it is very clearly referring to a literal 24-hour day in Genesis 1 for the days of creation. We need to carefully observe the text of Scripture to better understand what it is saying. Let's look at part of Genesis 1:

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.  
And God saw that the light was good. And God separated  
the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and

the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. (Genesis 1:3-8)

Now, just in these first few verses, do you notice the pattern? God creates something, names it, and then there was evening and there was morning, and it was the [insert number] day. Evening, morning, number, day. That's the pattern. So just from these opening verses, we can assume that the days were literal 24-hour days. If they were not, why would Moses have been so specific? But these are just the first two days of creation. Does the pattern carry on through the rest of the account of creation week? In fact, it does:

And there was evening and there was morning,  
the third day. (Genesis 1:13)

And there was evening and there was morning,  
the fourth day. (Genesis 1:19)

And there was evening and there was morning,  
the fifth day. (Genesis 1:23)

And there was evening and there was morning,  
the sixth day. (Genesis 1:31)

Evening, morning, number, day. In every instance in Genesis 1, that pattern in association with *yôm* indicates a normal-length day. But is there another passage we can turn to that will help us understand the meaning of *yôm* in Genesis 1?

Exodus 31:12 says that God commanded Moses to say to the children of Israel:

Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed. (Exodus 31:15–17)

Where do we get our seven-day week? From Genesis 1. The above passage from Exodus shows clearly that the days of creation were thought of as normal-length days, and the workweek was modeled after creation week. “In six days the Lord made heaven and earth”—that does not get much clearer.

Exodus 31:18 tells us that God gave Moses two tablets of stone upon which were written the commandments of God, written by the finger of God. Because God is infinite in power and wisdom, there is no doubt that he could have created the universe and its contents in no time at all, or six seconds, or six minutes, or six hours—after all, with God nothing will be impossible (Luke 1:37).

But that brings us to the question, why did God take so long? Why as long as six days? The answer is also given in Exodus 20:11, based on the fourth commandment: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Outside of Scripture, a seven-day week has no basis. It finds its origin in the first book of the Bible. In Exodus 20, God commands his people, Israel, to work for six days and to rest for one—thus giving us one reason why he deliberately took as long as six days to create everything. God set

the example for man in Genesis 1, and our week is patterned after this principle.

Consider this: if God had created everything in six thousand or even six million years, followed by a rest of one thousand or one million years, then we would have a very interesting week indeed!

Some say that Exodus 20:11 is just an analogy meant to communicate the idea that man is to work and rest—not that it was intended to communicate six literal 24-hour days followed by one literal 24-hour day. However, Bible scholars have shown that this commandment is not an analogy. No, it was a standard that was intended to be remembered by God’s people. In other words, it was to be six literal days of work, followed by one literal day of rest, just as God worked for six literal days and rested for one.

## **Objections to Six Literal Days**

Even after I present such a clear interpretation of Scripture, many times people will come to me and ask about or present objections to a literal six days. So I think it would be helpful to present some of those objections here, along with clear biblical refutations to them. That way, you will be better equipped to respond to these claims when they are presented.

### **1. Science proves the earth is old.**

The first of these common objections is that “science” has supposedly shown the earth and universe to be billions of years old, so the days of creation must also be long periods of time. Of course, the age of the earth, as determined by man’s fallible dating methods, is based on unproven assumptions—so it is not proven that the earth is billions of years old. What’s more, this unproven age is being used to force an interpretation on the language of Scripture.

In other words, man's fallible ideas are allowed to interpret God's Word, which undermines the use of language to communicate.

Another problem with this claim has to do with the fossil layers. Evolutionary scientists claim the fossil layers over the earth's surface date back hundreds of millions of years. As soon as one allows millions of years for the fossil layers, then one has accepted death, bloodshed, disease, thorns, and suffering before Adam's sin. But the Bible makes it clear that these things are a consequence of sin. In Genesis 1:29–30, God gave Adam and Eve and the animals plants to eat. Man was permitted to eat meat only after the flood (Genesis 9:3). This makes it obvious that the statements in Genesis 1:29–30 were meant to inform us that man and the animals were vegetarian to start with.

After Adam disobeyed God, Scripture tells us that the Lord clothed Adam and Eve with "garments of skins" (Genesis 3:21). We believe this was the first animal death recorded in the Bible. The reason blood had to be shed can be summed up by Hebrews 9:22: "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."

God requires the shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sins. What happened in the garden of Eden was a picture of what was to come in Jesus Christ, who shed his blood on the cross as the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

If the garden were sitting on a fossil record of dead things millions of years old, then blood would have been shed before sin. This completely undermines the foundation of the atonement. The Bible is clear: the sin of Adam brought death and suffering into the world. As Romans 8:19–22 tells us, all creation "has been groaning" because of the effects of the fall, and the creation will be liberated "from

its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8:21).

Revelation 21–22 makes it clear that there will be a “new heaven and a new earth” one day, where there will be no more death and no more curse—just like it was before sin changed everything. If there are to be animals as part of the new earth, obviously they will not be dying or eating each other, nor eating the redeemed people! Thus, adding these supposed millions of years to Scripture destroys the foundations of the message of the cross.

## **2. Literal days limit God.**

Another objection I often hear is that when we insist that creation week was six solar days, we are limiting God, whereas allowing God billions of years does not limit Him. Actually, insisting on six ordinary days of creation is not limiting God but limiting us to believing that God actually did what he tells us in his Word. What’s more, if God created everything in six days, as the Bible says, this surely reveals the power and wisdom of God in a profound way—the Creator of the universe did not need eons of time. Billions of years, on the other hand, diminishes God by suggesting that God needed huge amounts of time to create. This limits God’s power by imposing fallible man’s word on God’s Word. As I said to someone once who used this objection, “I don’t limit God; I limit myself. I let God tell me what he did—I don’t tell God what he supposedly did.”

## **3. Genesis 1 and 2 contradict each other.**

Many people, including professing Christians, claim that Genesis 2 is a different account of creation, with a different order, so Genesis 1 cannot be accepted as teaching six literal days. But really, Genesis 2 is not a different account of creation. Most of it is a more detailed account of day six of creation. Chapter 1 is an overview of the whole of creation

in chronological order; chapter 2 gives details surrounding the creation of the garden of Eden, the first man and his activities on day six, and the creation of the first woman. We see this pattern of an overview followed by a more detailed explanation in other accounts, such as the flood and the tower of Babel.

Between the creation of Adam and the creation of Eve, the King James Version says, “Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air” (Genesis 2:19). This seems to say that the land beasts and birds were created between the creation of Adam and Eve. However, Jewish scholars did not recognize any such conflict with the account in chapter 1, where Adam and Eve were both created after the beasts and birds (Genesis 1:23–25). There is no contradiction because in Hebrew the precise tense of a verb is determined by the context. It is clear from chapter 1 that the beasts and birds were created before Adam, so Jewish scholars would have understood the verb “formed” to mean “had formed” or “having formed” in Genesis 2:19. If we translate verse 19, “Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field,” the apparent disagreement with Genesis 1 disappears completely.

#### **4. Seventh day is not literal.**

Some people make the claim that because there is no “evening and morning” for the seventh day of creation week (Genesis 2:2), we must still be in the “seventh day,” meaning that none of the days were ordinary days.

But look again at my explanation above on interpreting Genesis 1. Exodus 20:11 clearly refers to seven literal days—six for work and one for rest. What’s more, God stated that he “rested” from his work of creation—not that he is resting! The fact that he rested from his work of creation does not preclude him from continuing to rest

from this activity. God's work now is different—it is a work of sustaining his creation and of redemption because of man's sin.

Furthermore, in arguing that the seventh day is not an ordinary day because it is not associated with “evening and morning,” proponents are tacitly agreeing that the other six days are ordinary days because they are defined by an evening and a morning. Regardless, the seventh day does have a number (seven) with the word *day*—which makes it clear it is an ordinary day.

Some have argued that Hebrews 4:3–4 implies that the seventh day is continuing today:

For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest,’” although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.”

However, verse 4 reiterates that God rested (past tense) on the seventh day. If someone says on Monday that he rested on Friday and is still resting, this would not suggest that Friday continued through to Monday! Also, only those who have believed in Christ will enter that rest, showing that it is a spiritual rest, which is compared with God's rest since the creation week. It is not some sort of continuation of the seventh day (otherwise everyone would be “in” this rest).

Hebrews does not say that the seventh day of creation week is continuing today, merely that the rest he instituted is continuing. God had rested from his work of creation, and now his work is one of reconciliation and redemption.



## Exegesis, Not Eisegesis

The Bible, when read with the plain meaning of the words in mind, makes sense. When we understand the Bible on its own terms, there is no need for man's fallible ideas to be mixed with Scripture to supposedly make sense of the world. God's Word provides answers to life's questions, including the question of how the universe came to be, where many of the rock layers and fossils came from, and how man came to be in his current sinful state. It also provides us with the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ—the one way that we can be saved from our sin problem and ourselves. But if we cannot trust the first 11 chapters of Genesis to mean what they say, how then can we have confidence in any of God's Word? The solution is clear: we have to take God at his Word from the very first verse.

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1 Martin Thielen, *What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011).

2 Ibid., p. 16.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., p. 18.

5 Ibid., p. 17.



# Did Jesus Say He Created in Six Literal Days?

by Ken Ham

A very important question we must ask is, “What was Jesus’ view of the days of creation? Did he say that he created in six literal days?”

When confronted with such a question, most Christians would automatically go to the New Testament to read the recorded words of Jesus to see if such a statement occurs.

Now, when we search the New Testament Scriptures, we certainly find many interesting statements Jesus made that relate to this issue. Mark 10:6 says, “But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’” From this passage, we see that Jesus clearly taught that the creation was young, for Adam and Eve existed “from the beginning,” not billions of years after the universe and earth came into existence. Jesus made a similar statement in Mark 13:19 indicating that man’s sufferings started very near the beginning of creation. The parallel phrases of “from the foundation of the world” and “from the blood of Abel” in Luke 11:50–51 also indicate that Jesus placed Abel very close to the beginning of creation, not billions of years after the beginning. His Jewish listeners would have assumed this meaning in Jesus’ words, for the first-century Jewish historian Josephus indicates that the Jews of his day believed that both the first day of creation and Adam’s creation were about 5,000 years before Christ.<sup>1</sup>

In John 5:45–47, Jesus says:

Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?

In this passage, Jesus makes it clear that one must believe what Moses wrote. And one of the passages in the writings of Moses, Exodus 20:11, states:

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

This, of course, is the basis for our seven-day week—six days of work and one day of rest. Obviously, this passage was meant to be taken as speaking of a total of seven literal days based on the creation week of six literal days of work and one literal day of rest.

In fact, in Luke 13:14, in his response to Jesus healing a person on the Sabbath, the ruler of the synagogue, who knew the law of Moses, obviously referred to this passage when he said, “There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” The Sabbath day here was considered an ordinary day, and the six days of work were considered ordinary days. This teaching is based on the Law of Moses as recorded in Exodus 20, where we find the Ten Commandments—the six-day creation week being the basis for the fourth commandment.

We should also note the way Jesus treated as historical fact the accounts in the Old Testament, which religious and atheistic skeptics think are unbelievable mythology. These historical accounts include Adam and Eve as the first married couple (Matthew 19:3–6; Mark 10:3–9), Abel as the

first prophet who was killed (Luke 11:50–51), Noah and the flood (Matthew 24:38–39), Moses and the serpent in the wilderness (John 3:14), Moses and the manna from heaven to feed the Israelites in the wilderness (John 6:32–33, 49), the experiences of Lot and his wife (Luke 17:28–32), the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:15), the miracles of Elijah (Luke 4:25–27), and Jonah and the big fish (Matthew 12:40–41). As New Testament scholar John Wenham has compellingly argued, Jesus did not allegorize these accounts but took them as straightforward history, describing events that actually happened just as the Old Testament describes.<sup>2</sup> Jesus used these accounts to teach his disciples that the events of his death, resurrection, and second coming would likewise certainly happen in time-space reality.

These passages taken together strongly imply that Jesus took Genesis 1 as literal history describing creation in six 24-hour days. But are there any more explicit passages?

I believe there are. However, one has to approach this issue in a slightly different manner. We are not limited to the New Testament when we try to find out if Jesus stated he created in six days; we can also search the Old Testament. After all, Jesus is the second person of the Trinity and, therefore, has always existed.

First, Colossians makes it clear that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was the one who created all things:

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:16–17)

We are also told elsewhere in Scripture how Jesus created: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by

the breath of his mouth all their host. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm” (Psalm 33:6, 9). We see the meaning of this when we consider the miracles of Jesus during his earthly ministry. All the miracles occurred instantly—at his Word. He instantly turned water into wine in his very first miracle, which “manifested his glory” as the Creator (John 2:1–11; John 1:1–3, 14, 18). It was the instant calming of the wind and the waves that convinced his disciples that he was no mere man. So it was with all his miracles (Mark 4:35–41). He did not speak and wait for days, weeks, months, or years for things to happen. He spoke and it was done. So when he said, “Let there be . . .” in Genesis 1, it did not take long ages for things to come into existence.

We also know that Jesus is in fact called the Word:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:1–3)*

Jesus, who is the Word, created everything by simply speaking things into existence.

Now, consider Exodus 20:1: “And God spoke all these words, saying . . .” Because Jesus is the Word, this must be a reference to the preincarnate Christ speaking to Moses. As we know, there are a number of appearances of Christ (theophanies) in the Old Testament. John 1:18 states: “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” There is no doubt, with rare exception, that the preincarnate Christ did the speaking to Adam, Noah, the patriarchs, Moses, and others. Now, when the Creator God spoke as recorded in Exodus 20:1, what did he (Jesus) say? As we read on, we find this statement: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea,

and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day” (Exodus 20:11).

Yes, Jesus did explicitly say he created in six days.<sup>3</sup> Not only this, but the one who spoke the words “six days” also wrote them down for Moses:

And the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words that the Lord had spoken with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly. (Deuteronomy 9:10)

Jesus said clearly that he created in six days. And he even did something he didn’t do with most of Scripture—he wrote it down himself. How clearer and more authoritative can you get than that?

## Ken Ham (see page 17)

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- 1 See William Whiston, transl., *The Works of Josephus* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson), p. 850, 1987, and Paul James-Griffiths, “*Creation days and Orthodox Jewish Tradition*,” *Creation* 26(2): 53–55, [answersingenesis.org/days-of-creation/creation-days-and-orthodox-jewish-tradition/](http://answersingenesis.org/days-of-creation/creation-days-and-orthodox-jewish-tradition/).
  - 2 John Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Press), pp. 11–37, 1973.
  - 3 Even if someone is convinced that God the Father was the speaker in Exodus 20:11, the Father and Son would never disagree. Jesus said in John 10:30, “I and the Father are one” [neuter—one in the essence of deity, not one in personality]. He also said, “I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me,” and “I always do the things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:28–29).

