**The Day Age vs. Framework Theories of Interpreting Genesis 1**

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**INTRODUCTION**

*“The sacred book likewise wishes to tell men that the world was not created as the seat of the gods, as was taught by other cosmogonies and cosmologies, but was rather created for the service of man and the glory of God. Any other teaching about the origin and makeup of the universe is alien to the intentions of the Bible, which does not wish to teach how heaven was made but how one goes to heaven . . .” – Pope John Paul II, “Scripture and Science”, 1981.[[1]](#endnote-1)*

Due to apparent blatant contradictions with science, probably all bible-believers today have asked themselves at least one time in their spiritual lives the question, “how should I interpret Genesis 1?” Though most Christians, including many Evangelicals, no longer demand that Genesis 1-3 was intended to portray literal accurate history and science, origins is still considered foundational for the Christian church.[[2]](#endnote-2) According to RC Sproul, from those chapters many important Christian doctrines emanate, including the natures of God, man and sin.[[3]](#endnote-3) As well, most believers, even though they likely don’t look to Genesis for answers to their lives’ daily issues, have much invested in how they interpret these early passages of scripture, since to them it relates to the authority and trustworthiness of the bible in general. Concerning the first chapter in the bible, some will only accept a strict and literal interpretation, while others are willing to consider various other options, creating broad categories of creationism, each with different theories on how to interpret Genesis 1. Some of these theories are in sharp disagreement with modern science. According to the author, the theory that best offers refuge to those who wish to hold to both the truth of the bible, and that of science, is the Framework Theory [FT]. However, a theory that is probably more known and adhered to in Evangelical Christianity is the Day Age Theory [DAT]. This paper will overview the essential aspects of those theories then analyze them in more detail to make the case that the best model from which to interpret Genesis 1, from both scientific and biblical perspectives, is the Framework Theory. In particular, the author has found six major flaws in the DAT, each one exposing a critical weakness in the theory, but the totality of which render it inviable as an interpretation of Genesis 1.

**BASIC CATEGORIES OF CREATIONISM**

A still large number of Evangelical Christians, many influenced by the Chicago Statements on Biblical Inerrancy and Hermeneutics, choose to interpret Genesis literally. To them, any other way of looking at those scriptures would amount to God lying to the world. With the obvious and well known difficulties of Genesis 1 and modern science, most of these believers simply will stand on a literal interpretation by faith, and view scientific explanations of some aspects of nature as either wrong, incomplete, or a combination thereof. Many may simply avoid thinking about science in relation to origins altogether. There are two main creation categories that biblical literalists hold to: Young Earth Creationism (YEC) and Old Earth Creationism (OEC), though not all OECs are bible literalists.

Young earth creationists believe that Genesis 1 teaches that the universe, including the earth, sun, moon, stars and all life on earth were created in six literal days, with Adam and Eve created on the sixth and God resting on the seventh. Using the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11, it is usually calculated by YECs that there are approximately 2,000 years between Adam and Abraham.[[4]](#endnote-4) Along with that, scholars believe that Abraham lived at about 2,000 BC, and the 2,000 years passed since Christ make earth and the universe being approximately 6,000 years old with this dating method. This is in clear disagreement with modern science, which dates the earth to be around 4.5 billion years old and the universe 13.8 billion years old. Because of these discrepancies and others with science, this theory of creation is rejected by the author as being invalid from a scientific standpoint.

Old earth creationism is now considered an umbrella term for different types of creation theories, the main ones being the gap theory, progressive creationism and evolutionary creationism[[5]](#endnote-5), though some may consider progressive creationism and evolutionary creationism as creation categories in their own rights.

The gap theory, now nearly extinct but the most popular OEC theory a century ago[[6]](#endnote-6), employs a literal take on Genesis 1, but finds wiggle room between verses 1 and 2 or 1 and 3.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2**Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. **3**And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. **4**God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. **5**God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.”[[7]](#endnote-7)

In arguably the most common variant, gap theorists state that there is an implied gap of time between, “in the beginning” when the earth was, “formless and void”, and when God created on the first day, as stated in verses 3-5.[[8]](#endnote-8) Some adherents might say that the earth went through a period of decay before God, “shaped it anew”.[[9]](#endnote-9) This amount of time is usually stated to be in the billions of years, so that the Genesis 1 creation account is more in line with modern science’s age of the earth at 4.5 billion years old. However, most gap theorists take the rest of Genesis 1 literally, so that after a long period of time God created the rest of creation in 6 literal days. The author finds exegetical and scientific issues with this view and thus rejects it as a legitimate rendering of Genesis 1.

Since YEC and OEC’s gap theory are scientifically unsatisfactory, this paper will analyze more closely the two OEC theories that best attempt to reconcile modern science with the first creation account, and those are the Day Age Theory (DAT) and the Framework Theory (FT). Evolutionary Creationism, while an OEC theory, doesn’t particularly relate to Genesis 1 and thus will not be discussed.

**DAY AGE THEORY**

The Day Age Theory of Genesis 1 holds that the six creative days are not literal, 24-hour normal days, but are long periods of time. In this way, the integrity of the bible and science are upheld, since the bible is telling us what we know from science, that the earth and the universe are very old, and that God, “created” different aspects of nature in different eras over a long period of time. Those eras are referred to as, “days” in Genesis 1. Day Age theorists interpret Hebrew words in Genesis 1 differently than do Young Earth Creationists.[[10]](#endnote-10) For instance, the word, “yom”, according DAT adherents, which is interpreted as, “day” in most bibles, can also mean “epoch” or “age”, as it does in other parts of the Old Testament, and in this way the days in Genesis 1 are referring to millions of years and not 24 hours. Outside of Genesis 1, they point out that the Hebrew words for father and son in the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 can be interpreted to mean, “forefather” and, “descendant”, and therefore claim that these genealogies are, “telescoped”[[11]](#endnote-11) to focus on more major figures, so that the genealogy-based dating of creation is inaccurate,[[12]](#endnote-12) allowing for an older earth and universe.

At first blush, this way of looking at Genesis 1 is appealing to the science-friendly believer. It allows for an abandoning of a literal interpretation, while at the same time still holding that chapter to be, “true” scientifically. However, a deeper look into it the DAT will reveal, as stated below, major scientific as well as exegetic issues.

**THE FRAMEWORK THEORY**

The Framework Theory posits that Genesis 1 groups the six creation days into two groups, or, “triads”.[[13]](#endnote-13) In this schema, God begins to order then populate the formless and empty early earth of verse 2, when the Spirit was hovering over the dark, primal waters.[[14]](#endnote-14) The first of the three days of creation starting in verse 3 have God creating light and separating it from the primal darkness.[[15]](#endnote-15) The second day has God creating the "firmament", separating, “water from water”[[16]](#endnote-16),[[17]](#endnote-17). On the third day God made seas and dry land by separating the water under the firmament, the land producing plants and trees.[[18]](#endnote-18) The second triad describes the populating of the elements of the first three days. Day four has God populating light with the sun, moon and stars. Day five has God populating the seas and air with fish and birds, and day six has God populating the vegetated land with man and animals. Adherents to the FT have proposed various organizing principles of the triads, such as, “kingdoms and kings, or, “kingdoms and decorations”. Others have three triads instead of two, sometimes with the, “separations” of the first three days making a third column, so that there are, “three columns of three”. The author takes the view that, regardless of the number and titles of the triads, the essential exegetical view is the same. The basic structure of the FT can be seen in the table below:[[19]](#endnote-19)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CREATION INGDOMS** | **CREATURE KINGS** |
| Day 1. Light | Day 4. Luminaries |
| Day 2. Sky,Seas | Day 5. Sea Creatures,Winged Creatures |
| Day 3. Dry land,Vegetation | Day 6. Land Animals,Man |
| **Day 7. Creator KingSabbath** |

An expanded or, “three rows of three” version is:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CREATION KINGDOMS** | **SEPERATIONS** | **CREATURE KINGS** |
| Day 1. Light | Light from Darkness | Day 4. Luminaries |
| Day 2. Sky,Seas | Water from Water | Day 5. Sea Creatures,Winged Creatures |
| Day 3. Dry land,Vegetation | Water from Land | Day 6. Land Animals,Man |
| **Day 7. Creator KingSabbath** |

Advocates of the Framework Theory understand that the opening bible chapter displays the goodness, intention and order of God’s created work, and is not a literal account of how God created the universe, or a simplistic overview of His creative acts to an ancient audience. The textual support of a schematic view of Genesis 1 goes beyond merely the evidential grouping of the six days. Says Old Testament and Pentateuch scholar [Gordon Wenham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordon_Wenham) of a schematic view of Genesis 1 in his two-volume commentary on Genesis:

“The six-day schema is but one of several means employed in this chapter to stress the system and order that has been built into creation. Other devices include the use of repeating formulae, the tendency to group words and phrases into tens and sevens, literary techniques such as chiasm and inclusio, the arrangement of creative acts into matching groups, and so on. If these hints were not sufficient to indicate the schematization of the six-day creation story, the very content of the narrative points in the same direction.”[[20]](#endnote-20)

The Framework Theory, held to today by many Evolutionary Creationists and some Progressive Creationists,[[21]](#endnote-21) was first introduce in 1924 by Dr. [Arie Noordzij](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Arie_Noordzij&action=edit&redlink=1) of the University of Utrecht and has gained some measure of popularity today though the writings of theologians and scholars such as [Meredith G. Kline](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meredith_G._Kline), [Henri Blocher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henri_Blocher), and [Bruce Waltke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Waltke).[[22]](#endnote-22)

**GENESIS OF THE DAY AGE THEORY – CONCORDISM**

For almost the first eighteen hundred years of Christian history, Genesis 1, for the most part, had been understood to be a literal description of how God created the universe, earth and life - that everything was created instantaneously over 6 creation days. The other major alternative theory of creation was that everything was created instantaneously and was explained in the bible as having taken place over a six-day period so that ancient readers could understand it more easily.[[23]](#endnote-23) Concordism, the idea that what the bible teaches and what, “nature” teaches should agree (concord) had been talked about as early as the middle ages and became a popular topic of conversation when, “the book of nature” references became common in the 17th century as early scientists Francis Bacon, Johannes Kepler, Galileo Galilei and others acknowledged extra-biblical sources of truth.[[24]](#endnote-24) Concordism of natural history took root in the late 18th century, when it became increasingly clear to geologists that the earth was steeped in, “deep time”.[[25]](#endnote-25) Various attempts at reconciling nature and Genesis 1 have been made over the past two hundred years, usually conforming to the latest scientific discoveries.

**DAY AGE THEORY PROBLEM #1 - THEOLOGICAL ISSUES WITH CONCORDISM**

Many concorders look to Augustine for support of biblical concordism, noting that he didn’t believe that the days in Genesis 1 were meant to be taken literally. One of the reasons for Augustine’s reasoning is that Genesis 1 has the sun being created after light was created in day one. Another reason is because of his interpretation of Ecclesiasticus 18:1, which states, “He created all things at once”.[[26]](#endnote-26) Augustine held that the 6-day creation is a, “logical framework”[[27]](#endnote-27), not a passage of time, with a spiritual meaning. His views don’t conform to YEC, OEC or Evolutionary Creationism, but he didn’t believe in an old earth and his views on Genesis 1 are due to mostly exegetical and not scientific concerns. What might be most insightful concerning his view of Genesis 1 is that he found it to be a difficult passage of scripture and that exegetes should be willing to change their views with new information.

It seems reasonable, even intuitive, since the bible is inspired by God, that the events listed in Genesis 1 would somehow correspond to the history of real events in the earth and universe. Therefore, when the scientific revolution, starting in the 16th century, began to make it increasingly clear that a literal reading of Genesis 1 did not conform to the latest scientific discoveries, many believers looked to harmonize science and the bible, leading to what we now call concordism. In his famous letter to the Grand Duchess Christina, Galileo wrote, ““the holy Bible can never speak untruth—whenever its true meaning is understood.”[[28]](#endnote-28) It was with that spirit that the early concordists sought to reconcile Genesis 1 and science - they saw themselves as simply applying Galileo’s logic in their harmonization quest.[[29]](#endnote-29) But was that theologically appropriate – i.e., should not the early harmonizers have taken the fact that modern science makes a literal rendering of Genesis 1 impossible speak to the possibility that the first creation account simply isn’t attempting to convey historical and scientific information at all.

According to Ted Davis, Fellow of the History of Science for the evolutionary creationism institute Biologos Foundation, a tenet of concordism is that the bible and science are both reliable sources of truth, and since God is the author of both of them, they must agree when properly interpreted.[[30]](#endnote-30)

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | http://biologos.org/files/resources/z-levels.gif[[31]](#endnote-31) |  |
|  |  |  |

But whose interpretation, of the bible and scientific data, should be used in concording the bible with science? And since scientific understandings of the world change, so would (and have) concordist theories. A major theological/exegetical issue with concordism is that it wasn’t until approximately 3,500 years after Genesis 1 was written (or spoken as an oral tradition) that anyone would have known that the earth and universe weren’t 6,000 years old. Therefore, for 75% of the history of God’s revelation, believers believed, from a literal reading of Genesis, things that we now know to be scientifically and historically false. With that being the case, it’s a real question to ask whether or not it should be theologically appropriate to attempt to concord Genesis 1 with science, given that a, “neutral” reading of Genesis 1, what had been the mode of reading it for 3,500 hundred years, is in stark contrast to scientific findings. Not only did it take millennia for believers to understand that Genesis 1 is not a literal interpretation of how God created the universe, but as well, interpretations of the data from nature are changing, so that concorders in different times have created different ways to harmonize the bible and science, leading to a problem with the Day Age Theory that is discussed below.

In summary, a major theological issue with the concordism, which the Day Age Theory is built on, is the fact that discrepancies with science and a straight reading of Genesis 1 were discovered only 500 years ago, and that attempting to concord Genesis 1 with science gives a tacit approval to the notion that God let believers hold to inaccurate views of the history of the universe for 3,500 years. And with, that the question of whether the text was attempting to portray historical and scientific truths, or not, is real.

**DAY AGE THEORY PROBLEM #2 – DISCORDANT CONCORDISM**

Because scientific knowledge changes over time, systems that were developed to concord Genesis with science have changed. Additionally, there has been a fair amount of variety in systems that were formed in the same eras that used the same data.

18TH CENTURY CONCORDANCE EXAMPLES

For example, two well-known eighteenth century Neptunists, Benoit de Maillet and Richard Kirwan published theories that attempted to concord science with Genesis. De Maillet, a French ambassador to Egypt, believed that the diminution of the oceans occurred over a two-billion year period and that that was in accordance to scripture.[[32]](#endnote-32) He also believed that Genesis 1:1 referred to pre-existent matter that God, “formed” over 6 non-literal days, and that the primeval waters created the mountains, which became visible with the diminution.[[33]](#endnote-33)

Kirwan, who unlike de Maillet was a devout believer[[34]](#endnote-34), believed that Genesis 1:2 referred to an earth that was, “partly in a chaotic state, and partly full of empty cavities”.[[35]](#endnote-35) To him the deep referred to, “the mixed or chaotic mass of earth and water."[[36]](#endnote-36) As well, he had that the Spirit hovering over the waters was, “an invisible elastic fluid”.[[37]](#endnote-37) He wrote that the light from day three, “probably denotes the flames of volcanic eruptions.”[[38]](#endnote-38) While neither Kirwan’s nor de Maillet’s theories were formally day-age theories, de Maillet thought it self-evident that the days in Genesis 1 weren’t literal days, not only because his diminution took two billion years, but also because there are three apparent 24-hour, “days” before the sun was created. Neither stressed much about the sequence of historical events as laid out in the chapter, since it didn’t contradict the scientific knowledge of their time.

19TH CENTURY CONCORDANCE EXAMPLES

In the nineteenth century, when further geological research made it clearer that the earth was very old, the gap and the day-age theories of interpreting Genesis 1 became popular, with the day-age theory winning out as geological discoveries started to rule out the gap theory. By the mid-1800s, intricate day-age models were developed.[[39]](#endnote-39) The Scottish amateur paleontologist-geologist and ecclesiastical journalist Hugh Miller held in his book, *The Testimony of the Rocks* that the creation was revealed to Moses in a series of visions, which were presented in the format of the six days. Miller believed that the days in Genesis 1 are symbolic days, representing, “divine periods”.[[40]](#endnote-40) He theorized that like a map representing a larger land mass to scale, the symbolic days were faithful representations of these divine periods. His first day had the sun struggling through a thick, cloudy atmosphere. On the second day Miller had fish and invertebrate life on earth, but Moses couldn’t see them since his attention in the vision was attracted to, “atmospheric phenomena”.[[41]](#endnote-41)

Princeton-based Swiss-American geographer and geologist Arnold Guyot was another prominent nineteenth century advocate of the day-age theory, who laid out his beliefs in a series of lectures that became his book *Creation*. Though he held that the bible was primarily a book about spirituality, he believed that Genesis 1 one agreed with the science of his day, with the creation account given as a grand, “cosmogenic week”.[[42]](#endnote-42) The waters of 1:2 were actually gaseous, as was the primordial matter - Hebrew “eres”, which could mean, “land” or, “matter” as well as, “earth”, so that the earth in 1:2 was gaseous. The Spirit of God moved on the face of the gas, separating the waters in the gas, which created light. [[43]](#endnote-43)The work of the second day consisted of organizing the heavens, with the, “vast primitive nebula”[[44]](#endnote-44) of the first day breaking up and forming stars. As he put it, “the nebulous masses (galaxies) of outer space were the heavens of heavens, that is, the waters above the heavens. In contrast, our own immediate celestial neighborhood consisting of the sun, moon, and nearby stars were the waters below the heavens.”[[45]](#endnote-45) The firmament was by default the space between the nearby and distant nebulas.

Guyot understood that the sequence of events, as laid out in a plain reading Genesis 1, were not according to what the science of the day understood them to be, knowing there was a problem with having plants created on the third day before land animals, and wrote that if the third day referred to all lands plants, then, “geology would assuredly disprove it.”[[46]](#endnote-46) He stated that the Genesis author mentioned different aspects of creation only once, so that the, “lowest” plants were created in day three, and became invisible in day five.

The geographer/geologist, who held that the light of day one was from the chemical reactions in the gaseous primordial matter, wrote that when that light disappeared, the light from the already present sun, moon and stars became visible. Thus, there was no ex-nihilo creation of the heavenly bodies in day four.

Also a prominent eighteenth century day age theorist was the Canadian geologist and evangelical Christian J. William Dawson. In his book *The Origin of the World According to Revelation and Science*, Dawson stated that the days of Genesis 1 were long and indeterminate in length, since, among other reasons, there was no day/night formula for day seven and that Genesis 2:5 mentioned no rain, implying that that couldn’t have been referring merely to a twenty-four hour period.[[47]](#endnote-47)

Dawson held that the dark from 1:2 was the dark outer space and the light from day one, “must have proceeded from luminous matter diffused through the whole space of the solar system.”[[48]](#endnote-48) This matter gradually concentrated within the earth’s orbit so that one hemisphere at a time would be lit. The water of the great deep was not distinct from the dense fog about the waters, which gradually gave way to give rise to the oceans and land masses. He held, as other geologists of the time did, that the cooling and contraction of the earth led to the elevation of the land masses and mountains. [[49]](#endnote-49) Dawson held that the Hebrew word, “min” (kind) referred to species and resisted Darwin’s evolution. In the fourth day the luminosity in the center of the solar system became condensed, creating the sun and moon, which could become markers for days and seasons and hitherto no exact definition of days or years existed. Large portions of the land masses re-submerged, thought Dawson, since the fifth day had land vegetation appearing.

As is apparent, there is much disagreement between the day-age theories of Kirwan, Guyot and Dawson, as well as discrepancies with all three of them with science. The following chart compares the concordances:[[50]](#endnote-50)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Miller** | **Guyot** | **Dawson** |
| Day 1 | Azoic period, clearing of cloudy atmosphere |  | Atmosphere clears |
| Day 2 | Silurian and old Red periods, development of atmospheres | Primitive nebula break up into gaseous masses and stars  | Clouds and oceans segregate |
| Day 3 | Carboniferous period, lush vegetation emerge | Earth cools, simple plants only | Eozioc period, continents |
| Day 4 | Permian and Triassic periods, final clearing of atmosphere | Archean period, (equivalent of Miller’s Azoic), sun becomes visible as glowing earth loses its luminosity | Sun condensed, continents re-submerged |
| Day 5 | Oolitic and Cretaceous periods, ichthyosaurs, plesiosaurs, birds, pterodactyls | Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras (equivalent of Miller’s Silurian through Cretaceous), marine animals and complex vegetation | Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras |
| Day 6 | Tertiary land mammals | Tertiary land mammals | Tertiary land mammals |

20TH CENTURY CONCORDANCE EXAMPLES

Twentieth century concordists, privy to up-to-date science, created theories which do a better job than previous attempts in concording Genesis 1 with science. However, they didn’t fare much better in concording with other. Davis A. Young, Professor Emeritus of Geology at Calvin College, previously held that the separation of the waters referred to the clouds and oceans. He, along with Guyot and Dawson, noted the difficulty of geology placing land animals before plants while Genesis 1 reversed the order, but surmised that, “the biasing of early Paleozoic rocks in favor of marine deposits had led us to overlook the possible importance of terrestrial land plants that might have existed earlier than we had thought.[[51]](#endnote-51) He later gave up on that possibility. In *The Genesis Answer,* University of Utah geologist William Lee stokes writes that the Genesis days are celestial days, “God’s division of his own creations.”[[52]](#endnote-52), and not time periods. Each division is dominated by a time of light, and a time of darkness. The water in Genesis 1:2 is water in outer space. He also held that the waters above and below the firmament were in space, and that the production of the firmament was, “equivalent to events that followed the production of the first light-producing objects of the galaxy”[[53]](#endnote-53), which was the light in day one. In this scheme, the waters above and below the firmament were the two opposite spiral arms of the galaxy. Robert C. Newman and Herman Eckelmann in their book *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* state that the days of creation were literal, 24-hours days but were separated by long periods of indeterminate length, and that most of the creative activity occurred between the days.[[54]](#endnote-54) They also held that the deep of Genesis 1:2 was, "the gas cloud, now a dark, cloudy and unfathomable region of space”[[55]](#endnote-55)

Anyone making an objective survey of day-age theories over the centuries would be forced to conclude that the theories don’t agree science, and those proposed based on the same date, in differing degrees, don’t agree with each other. These findings caused former day-age theory advocate Young to abandon it, writing, “there has been absolutely no consensus among evangelical Christians about interpretation of the details of the biblical accounts of creation…”[[56]](#endnote-56)

**DAY AGE THEORY PROBLEM #3 – GOD BELIEVES IN 6 LITERAL DAYS**

DAT believers often use the Old Testament to back up their claim that the Hebrew, “yom”, which is almost always translated as, “day” in English bibles, can refer to longer periods of time. John Oakes, PhD in Chemical Physics and Christian apologist, makes the point in his book *Is There A God* that, “yom” is translated as, “time”, “today”, “forever”, “continuously”, “age”, “life” and, “perpetually” along with, “day” in the Old Testament. However, every time that, “yom” appears with a number, 410 times outside of Genesis 1,[[57]](#endnote-57) it is translated as a literal 24-hour day in the Old Testament.[[58]](#endnote-58) Also, the Hebrew words for, “morning” and, “evening” used together, which occurs 38 times, always represent a regular day, as do the combinations of “yom” plus, “morning, used 23 times, and, “yom” plus, “evening” which is used 52 times.[[59]](#endnote-59)

Perhaps even more convincing that the days in Genesis 1 are meant to refer to literal, 24-hour periods is what the bible itself says about the matter. God, in delivering the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20, says to Moses:

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. **9**Six days you shall labor and do all your work, **10**but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. **11**For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day.  Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”[[60]](#endnote-60)

Thus, it appears that God Himself wants us to think of the creation days as literal days.

Probably most convincing is that fact that preceding every mention of the word, “yom” in the bible’s first chapter is the phrase, “And there was evening, then there was morning…” It seems the Genesis 1 author also had 24-hour days on the brain.

It should be noted that some OEC scholars have rebutted that argument that, “yom” plus a number automatically renders it to mean a regular day. Rodney Whitfield, PhD writes in the scholarly article, “The Hebrew Word ‘Yom’ Used with a Number in Genesis 1” that there may be two instances in the Old Testament in which, “yom” plus a number referred to something other than an ordinary day.[[61]](#endnote-61) He also argues that, “day” should not be used to interpret, “yom” and that, for instance, the Hebrew for, “the second day” should be rendered, “a second time”.[[62]](#endnote-62) Even granting the two instances, which are debatable, the overwhelming number of times that, “yom” is used with a number, at least 408 out of 410 times, it is translated as a literal, 24-hour day. Along with that is the fact that every day in Genesis 1 is preceded with the, “evening and morning” phrase, in addition to God describing the creation days in Exodus 20 as regular days – all which, together, to make an insurmountable case that the bible itself has given us the answer – “yom” in Genesis 1 refers to ordinary, 24-hour days.

**DAY AGE THEORY PROBLEM #4 – THE 3-TIERED UNIVERSE**

The writer of Genesis 1 didn’t live in an historical vacuum - he breathed the same, “cultural air”, as did the Hebrews’ ancient counterparts, the people of the ancient Near-East (ANE), according to Old Testament and Hebrew Language scholar Dr. Kyle Greenwood in his book [*Scripture and Cosmology: Reading the Bible Between the Ancient World and Modern Science*](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0830840788/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0830840788&linkCode=as2&tag=musionscieand-20&linkId=5IVMELZ3SM5ELKSR)*.[[63]](#endnote-63)* **According to Greene and other scholars, ANE peoples understood the universe to be a 3-tiered system.**[[64]](#endnote-64) **: one - the heavenly realm; two, the earthly world; and three, the underworld – a 3-tiered universe.**[[65]](#endnote-65) **This structure of the universe is a reasonable interpretation of the world by a person living in the ANE who would have seen the earth as a land surrounded by waters and mountains. Though there are differences in this universe among different ANE peoples, and even scriptural descriptions are not completely consistent, the ancients believed in a circular, flat earth that was supported on the primeval waters by columns or floated on them as a disc. They held to a, “firmament”, or sky, sometimes described as a solid structure that held back cosmic waters that surrounded the earth. They believed in a higher level of heavens where God (or gods) resided, while the “lower” heavens held the stars, planets and moon.**[[66]](#endnote-66) **They also believed in an, “underworld”, which was below the land or in the waters below the land.**[[67]](#endnote-67) **The firmament rested on pillars or on mountains that were at the edge of the flat earth. The seas consisted of water above, below and around the earth (land). Greenwood writes, “**These three tiers, the heavens, the earth and the seas, provided the basic structural models necessary for explaining the entire cosmos*.”* **The basic structure of the 3-tiered universe is seen the picture below:**

[[68]](#endnote-68)

**That the biblical authors thought of the world and universe in this way is without question. The following three Old Testament verses mention the earth, sea and heavens:**[[69]](#endnote-69)

[Exodus 20:11](http://ebible.com/query?utf=8%E2%9C%93&query=Exodus%2020%3A11&translation=ESV&redirect_iframe=http://www.patheos.com/ebible)

For in six days the Lord made the heavens andthe earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day.

[Nehemiah 9:6](http://ebible.com/query?utf=8%E2%9C%93&query=Nehemiah%209%3A6&translation=ESV&redirect_iframe=http://www.patheos.com/ebible)

You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

[Proverbs 3:19-20](http://ebible.com/query?utf=8%E2%9C%93&query=Proverbs%203%3A19-20&translation=ESV&redirect_iframe=http://www.patheos.com/ebible)

By wisdom the Lord laid the earth’s foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; by his knowledge the watery depths were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.

Writers in the New Testament also expressed that they knew the universe as 3-tiered. Paul, in his famous exhortation for us to have the same mindset as Christ in relationships, concludes the passage with:

Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place
    and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
    in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
    to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:6-11)[[70]](#endnote-70)

There are many other scriptural examples supporting the 3-tiered universe[[71]](#endnote-71), so many in fact that Greenwood concludes, *“*As we look through the whole of Scripture, we will note that whenever the biblical authors reference the structure of the cosmos, they do so using the same terminology and conceptual framework as their ancient counterparts*.”*[[72]](#endnote-72) However, there are major differences between the biblical description of the 3-tiered universe and that of their ANE neighbors. The sun, moon and stars in the bible are not deities to be worshipped but are created by God and are his servants.[[73]](#endnote-73) The Genesis 1 author used the science of the day – the 3-tiered universe, to make the theological point that God is the creator and ruler of the universe, who took the pre-creation chaos mentioned in Genesis and created an ordered and, “good” cosmos, stripped of other deities.

This belief of the ANE peoples of a 3-tiered universe makes concording Genesis 1 with science impossible, since we, with our 21st century mindsets, cannot read into the first creation account what we would like to read into it. Famous evolutionary creationist Denis Lamoureux in his book *Evolutionary Creation* offers a thought experiment to make this point.[[74]](#endnote-74) He asks readers to consider Genesis 1:1-2:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.[[75]](#endnote-75)

Dr. Lamoureux states that most people would think of this dark, watery and chaotic scene as being the spherical earth. But, as he points out, the Hebrew word for earth, *eres,* is used in the Old Testament 2,500 times and is never interpreted as a sphere, nor does its contexts shape it as a sphere. The same can be said of the Greek word for earth in the New Testament *ge*, which is used 250 times and was used at a time when the Roman world was coming into the realization that the earth was spherical.[[76]](#endnote-76) This experiment shows that instead of interpreting the bible properly, which is exegesis, we can so easily, especially when it comes to origins, be culpable of eisegesis, or reading our preconceived notions or worldviews into a passage of scripture. For example, many present day concorders see the waters, “above the vault” in day 2 as being clouds, or mist. But it is clearly referring to the cosmic waters, which has no scientific basis and which were according to Genesis 1 separated from the seas, around and under the earth, by the, “vault” or sky. It is impossible to see these waters in any other way, the immediate ANE contexts simply do not allow it. Seeing the waters above the vault as clouds or mists therefore is bible eisegesis, and not exegesis.

One way of getting around the 3-tiered universe by concordists is to state that the descriptions of the universe as being 3-tiered, in and/or outside the bible are either poetic or metaphoric. Greenwood rejects that notion, stating in his book, “nowhere in the ancient world do we find the authors explaining their cosmology in any other terms besides the three-tiered system.”[[77]](#endnote-77) Many descriptions of elements of the 3-tiered universe are found in wisdom literature, in Job and the Psalms, for example. That does nothing to negate the point, according to Greenwood, since the ancient Hebrew’s worldview of the universe would creep into wisdom literature as it would other biblical genres. Passages alluding to a 3-tiered universe in other parts of the bible, combined with descriptions in ANE literature, make clear that the ancient Near-East people did think of the universe as being 3-tiered, and that mindset was represented by the wisdom literature authors. That being the case, there is no basis in attempting to harmonize this ancient phenomological universe with modern science.

**DAY AGE THEORY PROBLEM #5 – CONRADICTIONS BETWEEN THE GENSIS 1 AND GENESIS 2 CREATION STORIES**

Both Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 have stories about human creation, which is more detailed in Genesis 2. Should there be any contradictions between the two accounts, it would be a devastating blow to concordance, since it would then be difficult to maintain that Genesis 1 is at all trying to give accurate scientific or historic information while at the same time displaying verifiable contradictions between any other biblical creation texts. Modern concordists typically claim that the Genesis 2 creation account is simply a more detailed account of day six of the creation story in Genesis 1, and that there are no apparent contradictions between the two. However, a closer examination of the texts reveals that that claim simply isn’t true. For instance, In Genesis 1, land plants are created on the 3rd day and humans on day 6, so that man was created after plants. Genesis 2:5-8 states:

“Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.”[[78]](#endnote-78)

Here it would seem that God created Adam before the garden in the east, but in this translation, it can’t be said with certainty since the text states that God, “had planted” the garden, making it unclear whether God had planted the garden before or after Adam’s creation, nullifying any supposed contradiction with Genesis 1. However, the translation is the NIV, which, unfortunately, has a reputation for harmonizing.[[79]](#endnote-79) As of the writing of this paper, in addition to the translations in Scripture4All[[80]](#endnote-80) and studybible.info[[81]](#endnote-81) Hebrew online interlinear bibles, the Authorized (King James) Version[[82]](#endnote-82), the Complete Jewish Bible[[83]](#endnote-83), the 21st Century King James Version[[84]](#endnote-84), the American Standard Version[[85]](#endnote-85), the English Standard Version[[86]](#endnote-86), the New American Bible (Revised Edition)[[87]](#endnote-87), the New American Standard Bible[[88]](#endnote-88), the New English Translation[[89]](#endnote-89), the New Revised Standard Version[[90]](#endnote-90) and the Orthodox Jewish Bible[[91]](#endnote-91) (which is every version checked) rendered the relevant part Genesis 2:8 as, “God planted” the garden. If we assume that the consensus of Hebrew experts more accurately represent the ideas God was attempting to express in this passage, then it would seem clear that Genesis 2 has Adam being created before plants, which is in direct contradiction to the Genesis 1 creation account that has plants being created before man.

Lest the concorder cry foul over translation bias, the man before/after plants is hardly the only issue with Genesis 2 vs. Genesis 1, only the most obtuse. Genesis 2:18-9a states:

“And Jehovah God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him’. **19**And out of the ground Jehovah God formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens;[[92]](#endnote-92)

Since verse 18 states that man was alone after created, it is clear that according to Genesis 2 God created animals after He created man. However, birds are created on the 4th day in Genesis 1, and land animals on the sixth day before man was created, as Genesis 1:24-26a states:

**“**And God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.’ And it was so. **25**God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.”

**26***Then* God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness,”[[93]](#endnote-93) (italics added).

The key word here, in verse 26, is, “then”, making the temporal status of man’s creation as after that of land animals, creating a clear contradiction with the creation account of Genesis 2.

It should be noted that Genesis 2 also has land animals and birds being created between the time when Adam and Eve were created. However, the author would agree with concorders this in not in direct contrast to Genesis 1, which gave no details as to the, “creation” of mankind. However, the contradictions between Genesis 1 and 2 regarding the timeline of creation of man, plants and bird/animals are real, and thus strike a sharp blow to the availability Genesis 1 to be concorded with science.

**DAY AGE THEORY PROBLEM #6 – INTERPRETIVE GYMNASTICS**

Even if we will allow for the, “days” to mean, “ages”, or, “epochs”, then in the very least the order of created things in Genesis 1 should match what we know from science if the DAT can have any validity – that is if Genesis 1 is truly revealing scientifically and historically accurate information. However, the order of created entities in Genesis 1 is simply not what we know to be true, and in some cases is laughably off, as in the case of the, “creation” of the sun and moon. Not only are they said to be created after light was created, they were created with the purpose to, “to govern the day and night”[[94]](#endnote-94), after there had already been three days and nights. A second example of an error of sequence is from the very beginning in Genesis, before day one, where the already formed earth is covered with water, while we understand the early earth to have been covered with volcanoes spewing out volatiles in a thick, dense atmosphere over a partly-molten crust. We know that it took in the very least it one hundred million years for the earth to form oceans that could reasonable qualify as, “the deep” (we’ll ignore the fact that these early, “oceans” were not very deep). A third is plants being created before land animals when we know from science that the opposite is true. To get around these sequence issues concorders can get creative, and in some cases could be reasonably accused of using interpretive gymnastics, as is discussed below. In fact, the level of subjective interpreting of Genesis 1, whether taken literally or not, to render it as providing accurate scientific information in the author’s opinion easily rises to the level special pleading.

VISIONS FROM GOD – HOW FOR SOME IT COULD HAVE WORKED

There have been different attempts to work around the problems of the order of created things in Genesis 1. Some have claimed that the days in Genesis 1 are a series of visions from God, similar to what Ezekiel experienced in Ezekiel 1. If that were the case, then one has room to be creative with the created things since the one having the vision (or the observer) could be said to have seen things that he thought were something but were really something else. Other problems melt away as well. For instance, the problem with the early earth not covered with water can be resolved by having the “pre-day 1 vision” simply not be of the earliest earth. Temporal issues could be resolved as well. For example, to get around the fact that Genesis has plants being created before animals, some have said that the plants described in day 3 of Genesis 1 are photosynthetic cyanobacteria, which would have been green and which came into existence well before land animals. That claim is easily refuted, however, since what is being described as being created on day 3 are, “seed-bearing plants and trees that bear fruits with seeds” [[95]](#endnote-95) and are specifically mentioned as being on land. The description is simply too specific to imagine that the Genesis author was seeing oceanic bacteria, which are not, “plants” in the way anyone would normally think of them and in any case are not on land. Another issue that some concorders resolve with the, “visions” scenario is the creation of the sun, moon, and stars on Day 4 referring to the clearing of the methane haze which created the oxygenic Third Atmosphere, when the blue sky and thus the sun, moon and stars became visible in the sky, and were not actually created after the earth, light and plants. That clearing happened approximately 2.5 billion years ago and thus could reasonably be considered to have taken place on day 4. The light from day 1 could be coming from any number of sources that weren’t visible to an earthly observer due to the thickness of the early atmosphere, but could have been seen by the writer in his day 1 vision. But, the light and darkness in day 1 are called by the writer as, “day”, and, “night”, both of which would have had to have been visible to an observer on earth and thereby making the day 4 vision useless. Also, the Genesis writer states that God, “made” the sun, moon and stars on day 4. That being the case, one would then have to ask why did not God inspire the author to describe the events of day 4 to more accurately portray the appearance of a clear atmosphere and blue sky, which allowed the heavenly lights to become visible, instead of writing, like he did for all of the other days, that God, “created” or, “made” the appearing things.

Regardless of the details of the concordances, as strained as they are, a larger problem with the, “vision” scenario, which would allow for more interpretive freedom, is that nowhere in Genesis 1 is there evidence that the depictions are from visions that God gave the author, as they were stated explicitly in Ezekiel 1. The depictions, communicated by an inspired author who never refers to himself as seeing anything, are clearly of what God did, and are not available to be seen as visions.

**JOHN OAKES’ DAY AGE THEORY**

John Oakes in his *Is there a God?* offers a more attractive DAT than most, as well as support for the reasonableness of the DAT in general. The rest of this section will critique the scientific and theological aspects of his approach and will show how easily problems arise in attempts at scientific concordance with Genesis 1.

THEORY DETAILS

Dr. Oakes’ theory is from the point of view of an observer of the face of the earth. Said observer 4.6 billion years ago would have observed the sun start to form in the middle of the solar system and would see it start to produce light, the light of Genesis 1:3. Volcanic activity would create a thick 2nd atmosphere which would hide the sun. Later, as the earth cooled, lighter materials like quartz and granite would rise to the earth’s outer crust as heavier materials such as basalt sunk. Plate tectonics of the lighter materials caused them to rise above the water, creating the first continents, which presumably is the gathering of the water under the sky (vault) on the first part of the day 3. Oakes interprets the second part of day 3, when God ordered the production of plants, as referring to the appearance of gymnosperms (plants bearing seeds which first appeared ~370 million years ago[[96]](#endnote-96)) and then angiosperms, which would be the trees bearing fruit with seeds (the first angiosperms were not trees and appeared 125 million years ago). He mentions that the photosynthetic algae created oxygen which cleared out the carbon dioxide (and methane), allowing the blue sky to appear and for the sun and the moon, “to be visible for the first time”.[[97]](#endnote-97) After that, more complex life formed such as birds, reptiles and mammals and eventually man. He then asks, “where are all the scientific blunders to be found in this description”.[[98]](#endnote-98) And, as far as has been thus mentioned, on the surface there is little to object to (if one accepts the non-literal days). However, a deeper look into the theory will reveal 4 major flaws, which are fleshed out below.

ISSUE 1: A VISION OF A VISION

Not the least of the problems with John Oakes’ seemingly coherent concordance is that it is essentially a, “visions” theory. And, as stated above, nothing in the text supports this sort of interpretation. The chapter is undeniably written as a recap of what God did in history. That being the case, it simply can’t be open to the prospect of the days being, “visions” or it being from the point of view of an observer on the face of the earth throughout earth’s history. This issue alone is a near, if not outright fatal, flaw to Oakes’ DAT attempt.

ISSUE 2: IT’S ALL ABOUT SEQUENCE

But what about the wonderful way in which Dr. Oakes concords the events listed in Genesis 1 with modern science? Can’t that be found compelling enough to prompt us to consider that Genesis 1 can be thought of as a, “vision”-type theory? Possibly. However, a closer scrutiny of this DAT attempt reveals that, beyond the theological problems, there are technical issues as well, including with the sequence of events. We know from science that the very first, “animals” appeared before land plants. John Oakes’ presumably tries to get around this by having the observer see the first gymnosperms and angiosperms on day 3. The first gymnosperms did appear before what we would normally call, “animals”.[[99]](#endnote-99) However, the angiosperms, about 125 million years old (the specific angiosperm mentioned in day 3, trees bearing fruits with seeds, appeared about 100 million years ago) appeared on earth about 200 million years after the first mammals[[100]](#endnote-100), a clear mistake of sequence. The, “vault” of day 2, or sky, appeared on earth 2.5 billion years ago. But the appearance of land in day 3 happened approximately 4 billion years ago[[101]](#endnote-101), making the creation events of day three happen 1.5 billion years before the events of day 2, another clear mistake of sequence. As mentioned above, even after allowing for creative interpretations, the sequence of created events of any DAT must match the sequence of Genesis 1, and that simply isn’t the case with John Oakes’ version of it.

ISSUE 3: INCONSISTENCY OF CREATED THINGS – MODERN OR ANCIENT

For a DAT theory to have validity, there would need to be an internal consistency of the referents to created things being modern or ancient varieties, but to be consistent one way or the other would create problems with the sequence of events, which again shows the difficulty, if not practical impossibility, of trying to concord an ancient, phenomological perspective to modern science. In his DAT attempt, Dr. Oakes is a bit vague and inconsistent in whether the observer is observing the first, primitive examples of the created things or more modern versions of them. For instance, he has the observer observing the plants in day 3 as the first gymnosperms, which appeared almost 400 million years ago, and later more complex forms of life, such as birds, reptiles, mammals then man. Gymnosperms did appear before modern animals, but the first animal phyla appeared before gymnosperms. As for vagueness in his theory, the plate tectonics creating land could be referring to the first appearance of land after the surface of the earth became covered with water, which occurred 4 billion years ago, 1.5 billion years before the formation of the vault, or to the beginning of modern plate tectonics which was 3.2 billion years ago, or to the point at which the modern continent formations were established, which was after the appearance of the sky (though they were 70% finished at that point)[[102]](#endnote-102). At what point in the geological evolution of modern continents did the observer observe land forming? One can’t simply point out that at one point in earth’s evolution land formed, and have that represent the events listed in day 3, when the event was in reality a process that took place over billions of years. Dr. Oakes could reasonably enough, if the vision scenario is assumed, attribute the observation as being that of the fully formed modern continents, which would date it after the formation of the vault. But to be consistent he would have to have all the observations being of the modern representations and this creates timeline mistakes – modern fish appearing before modern plants, for example.[[103]](#endnote-103)

ISSUE 4: THE SCIENCE- IT IS A' CHANGIN’

As the Genesis 1 writer was using the science of his day to couch the theology presented, concorders use the science of their day to form their DAT theories. A problem with that is, of course, new data and interpretations of data constantly arise, making a completely accurate concordance practically impossible, as has been mentioned. And this problem shows its head in John Oakes’ theory. The observer in his scheme would have seen the appearance [Archaefructus liaoningensis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaefructus_liaoningensis), what is considered to be the first angiosperm that appeared about 125 million years ago.[[104]](#endnote-104) But that may be incorrect, since there is now growing evidence that the first angiosperms, including this one, appeared in water.[[105]](#endnote-105) If that is true, then the observer couldn’t have observed the first angiosperms as appearing on land, creating a clear-cut mistake and underlying the fruitlessness of concording ever-changing science with the bible.

But the concorder may cry foul here, since it is subset of ancient angiosperms, trees bearing fruit with seeds, that the observer must have seen (a distinction that Dr. Oakes doesn’t make), along with seed-bearing plants, since that is what Genesis 1:11 says God created on day 3. Since trees live on land, there is no mistake. However, this new evidence does uphold the idea that since data and interpretations of data are constantly changing in science, some parts of Oakes theory may be truly found to be wrong in twenty or one hundred years from now, just as DAT theories from early concording attempts have been proven to contradict modern science. But to be technical with the current point, Dr. Oakes in his theory does say that the observer saw the appearance of the first gymnosperm and angiosperms, and that now appears to be a mistake in the case of angiosperms.

With problem 4 fleshed out, it seems more evident that that Genesis 1 is a Hebrew version of the 3-tiered universe, which is made from an ancient, phenomological perspective. Any attempt to concord that with modern science will be fraught with difficulties. These difficulties are represented in the following table, which compares the days in Genesis 1 with what John Oakes says they represent, along with the dates of those events. The chart following that table shows that the timeline of cosmologic, geologic and biologic events with their dates and when they occur in Genesis 1, underlying the difficulties inherent in any concordance attempt.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **Genesis 1** | **Oakes’ Scientific Interpretation** | **Geological Time of Oakes’ DAT (BP)** |
| **1** | Light (evening + morning) | Sun created in center of Solar System | 4.6 billion years |
| **2** | Vault created and waters separated | Methane and CO2 cleared 🡪 blue sky | 2.5 billion years |
| **3** | 1. Waters under the vault gather to one place so dry ground can appear
2. Land vegetation
 | First large pieces of continental crust from partial melting in lower crust (?)1st Gymnosperm1st Tree w/fruit | 4.0 billion years 375 million years100 million years  |
| **4** | Sun, moon and stars created | Sun, moon and starsvisible in the new sky | 2.5 billion years |
| **5** | Fish and Birds created | After plants | Fish: 500 million[[106]](#endnote-106)Birds: 170 million |
| **6** | Land animals (mammals) createdMan created |  | 300 million years[[107]](#endnote-107)200,000 years |
| **7** |  | **God Rested** |  |
| **Millions of Years Ago** | **Geologic Features** | **Biologic Features** | **Genesis 1 Day** | **Genesis 1****Says** |
| 4,500 | Formation of the Earth. Water present but no oceans, molten crust.[[108]](#endnote-108)Earliest atmosphere of solar nebula hydrides – water vapor methane and ammonia[[109]](#endnote-109) | No life.  | By day 1. | “…darkness was over the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”[[110]](#endnote-110) |
| 4,500 | Moon formed[[111]](#endnote-111) |  | Day 4 |  |
| 4,500-3,400 | Volcano outgassing and Late 2nd Bombardment produce 2nd Atmosphere consisting of nitrogen, water vapor, carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulfide[[112]](#endnote-112) |  |  | Day 1: Light created |
| 4,000-4,100 |  | Earliest simple life.[[113]](#endnote-113) |  | Day 2: Vault (sky) created |
| **Millions of Years Ago** | **Geologic Features** | **Biologic Features** | **Genesis 1 Says** | **Genesis 1** |
| 3,800 | Water-related sediments found[[114]](#endnote-114) |  |  |  |
| 3,600 |  | First Oxygen producing Bacteria[[115]](#endnote-115) |  |  |
| 3,400 | Nitrogen atmosphere[[116]](#endnote-116) |  |  | Day 3: Land plants created |
| 2,700-2,050 | Oxygen atmosphere created, nitrogen cleared, blue sky appears[[117]](#endnote-117),[[118]](#endnote-118) |  | Day 2 |  |
| 1,800 |  | First complex cell with nucleus. |  |  |
| 1,000 |  | Trace fossils of simple multi-cell eukaryotes |  |  |
| 635 |  | Complete fossils of multi-cell animals |  |  |
| 541-485 |  | Cambrian Explosion, first fish, nearly all invertebrates.[[119]](#endnote-119)First modern animal phyla appear.[[120]](#endnote-120) | Day 5 (fish) Day 6 (animals) |  |
| **Millions of Years Ago** | **Geologic Features** | **Biologic Features** | **Genesis 1 Says** | **Genesis 1** |
| 485-423 |  | First green land plats[[121]](#endnote-121) | Day 3 |  |
| 423-373 |  | First trees, seed bearing plants, insects and amphibians.[[122]](#endnote-122) | Day 3 (trees and seed bearing plants. |  |
| 359-331 |  | First land vertebrates.[[123]](#endnote-123) | Day 6 |  |
| 323-304 |  | First winged insects.[[124]](#endnote-124) |  |  |
| 304-254 |  | Pangea supercontinent created. Beetle and flies evolve. First, “true” seed plants.[[125]](#endnote-125) |  |  |
| 251 | Permian-Triassic extinction event. | 95% of life extinct.[[126]](#endnote-126) |  |  |
| 252-209 |  | Dinosaurs appear on land and sea. First mammals and crocodiles.[[127]](#endnote-127) |  |  |
| 145-72 |  | Primitive birds, modern fish and flowering plants appear.[[128]](#endnote-128) | Day 5 (birds and fish) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Millions of Years Ago** | **Geologic Features** | **Biologic Features** | **Genesis 1 Says** | **Genesis 1** |
| 72-38 |  | “Modern” mammal families, moderate cooling climate.[[129]](#endnote-129) | Day 6 (animals) |  |
| 23-7 |  | Recognizable mammals and birds.[[130]](#endnote-130) | Day 5 (birds)Day 6 (animals) |  |
| 5.3-3.6 |  | Australopithecines, Homo Habilis, existing genera of mammals, recent mollusks.[[131]](#endnote-131) | Day 6 (animals) |  |
| 0.200 |  | Modern humans appear.[[132]](#endnote-132) | Day 6 |  |

John Oakes’ attempt at concordance is admirable, but unfortunately, like the attempts of others before his, it has problems with the sequence of events, and in his particular case is inconsistent with the what aspect of the created things the observer sees, whether primitive or modern. This is in addition to the fact that it is essentially a, “visions” scenario and as well ignores the fact, as all attempts of concordance do, that the writer was clearly writing from an ancient, phenomological perspective.

THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR THE DAY AGE THEORY IN *IS THERE A GOD?*

Dr. Oakes’ offers a fair amount of theological discussion in defense of the DAT in *Is There A God?* He starts by stating that DAT believers hold that in Genesis 1 God explains how he created the world, “that it is accurate in describing what happened – but metaphorical in describing the actual amount of time involved.”[[133]](#endnote-133) As stated above, many believers would believe that statement with the thought, “of course that’s what Genesis 1 is, God would never tell us something that wasn’t true.” But the statement fails to hold up under any scrutiny. For one, even granting a metaphorical time description to be true, there are other things that must be taken as metaphorical descriptions to handle the sequence issues of a straight rendering. In fact, Genesis 1 is unscientific in ways that even an ancient could see – for example the sun created after 3 days and nights, even though it functions, together with the moon and stars, to, “govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness”.[[134]](#endnote-134) That the case, what is the theological case for looking for science in Genesis 1 at all, besides, “God would never lie to us?”. A second issue with that thought is that God could have, and in the author’s opinion, as stated above, would have, inspired the Genesis author to make clearer the alleged metaphorical aspects of Genesis 1 if the DAT is true. For instance, inspiring, “after many moons” instead of, “and then there was evening, and then there was morning” or, “the lights in the vault appeared out of the great haze”, instead of, “God made two great lights”. What can compel us to think the writer didn’t mean that God created the sun, moon and stars on day 4? To justify a non-literal look at Genesis 1, Oakes states the fact that Philo, Origin, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas all allowed for a non-literal interpretation, which is true. However, that in no way necessitates Genesis 1 to be scientifically and/or historically accurate. In the same paragraph John Oakes goes on to state that the purpose of the bible is not to teach science, but the nature of God, and that the ancients couldn’t have understood a scientifically literal creation account. Agreed. Then why force science into it at all? Why can’t Genesis 1 simply be a theologically true response to creations accounts of the day using the world-view of the day, that of the 3-tiered universe, without requiring it to answer to modern science? Dr. Oakes then states, “when we allow ancient Near Eastern ways of thinking to influence our reading of scientifically relevant statements in the Old Testament, we will find a striking agreement between the bible and empirical science.” The author has two responses to that statement. One, he would disagree that Genesis 1 contains, “scientifically relevant”, statements, but statements couched in the scientific worldview of the ANE. Two, it is only after we take, “days” to mean, “eras”, which has been shown to be biblically inappropriate, then have the text be a series of visions or from the point of view of an observer, also shown to be inappropriate, then finally subjectively choosing what modern or ancient referents the created things in Genesis 1 are referring to can we find, “striking agreement between the bible and empirical science.”

After laying out the details of his DAT, Oakes discusses other ANE creation stories as well as additional ones, making the claim that they are “not to be taken seriously”[[135]](#endnote-135) scientifically, to which the author agrees, with the bible being an exception, to which the author does not agree. He next states there the creation story in Genesis 2 is merely a detailed version of the day 6 of Genesis 1 which doesn’t introduce any contradictions to Genesis 1, a point which is strongly contradicted above.

John Oakes next opens an honest dialog with the reader about the challenges to the DAT, starting with assessing the availability of the days in Genesis 1 to be interpreted as non-literal days, when each day’s description ends with, “and then there was evening, and then there was morning, the \_\_ day”. Following that is a discussion of the theological appropriateness of having science interpret established biblical interpretations. He uses Augustine to support that hermeneutical concept, who said essentially that if solid scientific conclusions contradict a biblical interpretation, then it is the interpretation that is wrong. He uses the example of geocentrism, stating that no one today would use the bible support it, though in Galileo’s day many conservative Catholic leaders did and felt very strongly that the bible claimed that the earth was at the center of the universe. There is a big difference between the two scenarios, however. In the Galileo affair, it was concluded by the theologians of the time that the passages that had been hitherto interpreted as declaring geocentrism were in fact poetic passages, which weren’t attempting to reveal scientific truths. In the case of the DAT, its adherents would like also to claim that established science can help us interpret the bible, but instead of resting on Genesis 1 as being merely poetic or metaphoric with a spiritual message, they want to claim that in addition it still contains accurate science and history hidden in the poetry or allegory with the unscientific science. The author finds this to be bad hermeneutics.

Following that, Dr. Oakes shifts to showing all the times in the Old Testament of the 1611 King James bible where, “yom” represented something other than a 24-hour period, even in some cases where the translators used, “day” to interpret it. However, this point was proven fruitless above, since though it is true that the Hebrew, “yom” doesn’t necessitate a literal, 24-hour time period in the Old Testament, it does in the contexts of its usage in Genesis 1. In addition is the fact, as stated above, that Moses made clear in Exodus 20:11 that the way we are to think of the days in Genesis 1 is that they are regular days. Therefore, the evidence against considering the days as non-literal makes it literally a slam-dunk case.

Oakes’ next makes a point that many concorders over the centuries have made, that the events of day 6, especially as described in Genesis 2, would seem to take longer than a literal day could afford. However, not only are there real contradictions between the two creation accounts, but the accounts most likely originate from different sources, which Dr. Oakes himself seems to believe.[[136]](#endnote-136) These facts combined make it seem possible, if not probable, that the source of the Genesis 2 creation account didn’t know about the Genesis 1 account, and therefore wasn’t attempting to write a, “detailed” version of day 6. But beyond that issue lies a major theological assumption of biblical concordance – that the bible contains no, “errors”. Even if the source of Genesis 2 was aware of the Genesis 1 creation account, there is no reason *a prioi*, outside of maintaining an, “inerrant” bible, which of course which didn’t exist then, to assume that said source would try to make his account, “correlate” with the Genesis 1 account. And since we don’t know when the accounts originated, it can’t be known which account came first, therefore making any assumption that the Genesis 2 source knew about the Genesis 1 account merely speculation. As well, there is no time period mentioned in the Genesis 2 account, and only an assumption that it is describing 6 from Genesis 1 would prompt anyone to imagine that the events of the second creation account all took place in one day, literal or metaphorical

In the last section of the section on the DAT John Oakes states that the, “outline” of the science presented in Genesis 1 is in general agreement with modern science. This has been refuted above. Oakes then states there are, “legitimate – but not insurmountable” theological and exegetical challenges to the DAT. As has been made obvious from above, the author strongly disagrees that the challenges to the DAT are surmountable.

THE GENESIS MYTH

Next in *Is There A God* is a discussion on, “The Genesis Myth”. Dr. Oakes states that some consider Genesis 1 to be a myth, like creation myths of the older ANE cultures, Sumerian, Egyptian, Babylonian and others, and that, written in a pre-scientific age, it cannot be expected to contain scientific truths. He states that it is nearly unchallenged in Western intellectual circles that Genesis 1 is a myth, primarily since those circles didn’t understand the strong case for the inspiration of the bible, and that would be the common-sense objection. Oakes implies that nobody of faith could believe in the Framework Theory, which is a version of the Genesis Myth theory. He states that those who hold to the Genesis Myth theory believe that Genesis 1 necessarily contains, “scientific nonsense”.[[137]](#endnote-137) However, that is a bit of a straw-man argument, since, as stated above, many Evolutionary Creationists believe in the, “mythical” account of Genesis 1, including the well-known bible/science scholar Denis Lamoureux and head of the NIH Francis Collins. Those ECs who hold that Genesis 1 is a myth hold not that it contains, “scientific nonsense”, but that it is not making scientific claims at all, and uses the ancient science the day as a substrate for the author’s (and God’s) theological points. John Oakes then goes on to repeat the claim that, though there are similarities between the Genesis 1 creation accounts and the other ANE myths, Genesis 1 contains striking scientific similarities to modern science, and that this point should not be ignored, when the other creation myths are so unscientific. But what he writes next shows the wrong theological strain of thought that concorders often hold to. Oakes states that there is much strong evidence that the bible is inspired, mentioning specifically messianic prophecies, and that he therefore, “gives the Genesis writer the benefit of the doubt”.[[138]](#endnote-138) To him, giving the benefit of doubt to the Genesis 1 writer means that his science must be compatible to the science of all believers at all ages, and therefore it is appropriate to concord the science of exegete’s time with the ancient text. There is the scent of inerrancy in that worldview – since the bible is inspired, then Genesis 1 must contain scientific truths. What is ignored is that the writer could be expressing theological truths using the science of the time, for the sake of relatability to the intended audience, and is not attempting to make, “scientific” claims. Though not stated explicitly, Dr. Oakes seems to be operating under the influence of Chicago Statements on Biblical Inerrancy, that, “properly understood” the bible contains no errors. Under that hermeneutic, one would have no choice to try to find some way to harmonize Genesis 1 with modern science. Ironically, the beauty of the FT is that it makes no claims for the truthfulness of science in Genesis 1, and therefore can more easily be considered, “inerrant” than can the DAT, with its interpretive gymnastics in having to explain clear contradictions between Genesis 1 and modern science. The concluding sentence of the section states, “When the scientific accuracy of the biblical account of creation is compared to the fabulous creation account of ancient cultures one cannot help be impressed by the bible – the word of God. Genesis is not a myth.” The author agrees that Genesis 1 is less fantastical than the other ancient creation myths, but that does not necessitate it containing, “scientific” truths. And, it is agreed, there is a scent of, “truth” to the Genesis 1 account. However, that is not because of its, “science”, but because, using the 3-tiered science of the day, it takes out the other gods and makes clear that the creation is the purposeful result of and is under the control of the great creator God. That being the case, there is no need to force modern science into that ancient, phenomenological perspective.

**ADVANTAGES OF THE FRAMEWORK THEORY**

It would be wrong to anoint the Framework Theory king of Genesis 1 interpretations by elucidating the weaknesses of rival theories, then claiming the FT correct by process of elimination. John Oakes asks in *Is There a God?* if it can be a coincidence that the Genesis 1, as seen in his DAT version, correlates so well with modern science. However, that’s after we’ve assumed that Genesis 1 is a series of visions and that some of the things that are referred to are not the modern versions but ancient ones, though that doesn’t seem to be what the author intended. In contrast, the Framework theory needs no conditions. One just needs to line up days 4-6 next to 1-3 and decided for himself whether the apparent schema is a coincidence or not.

This seemingly fitting way that the FT explains Genesis 1 can be explained by its following strengths.

A THEORY FOR ALL AGES

Since the Framework Theory abandons concordance, it can be held to by believers in any age. As shown above, advances in scientific knowledge have led to radical changes in the individual implementations of the Day Age Theory over the centuries. But even more condemningly, and as well stated above, no one even thought to concord science with the bible until the age of modern science, leaving the first 3,500 years of believers necessarily to believe in the wrong science, making the DAT a theory for only modern times. In the author’s opinion, this a nothing less than a fatal flaw in the DAT. In contrast, a believer in any age can coherently hold that Genesis 1 tells a theological story using the science of the author’s day. That most believers did not believe that is not necessarily a blow to the FT, for two reasons. One, we do not know with any certainty what believers 4,000 years ago believed about Genesis 1. Two, it would be easy to produce a long list of faulty theology and exegesis, especially when concerning science and the bible, showing that incorrect views of a biblical text can easily take hold, and, from what we can see from history, last for centuries.

ALLOWS A BETTER APPRECIATION OF GENESIS 1 THEOLOGY

By taking the emphasis off, “science”, a believer then is allowed to see the theological power of Genesis 1, where the author, under the inspiration of the Almighty, “opens with the simple infallible revelation that the God of the Hebrews is the only Creator”[[139]](#endnote-139). The writer thus efficiently and poetically eliminates other Gods, strips the divinity from the sun, moon and stars and, “de-deifies chaos”[[140]](#endnote-140), putting it, and all created things, “under the command of Yahweh”.[[141]](#endnote-141)

WOULD HELP THE BIBLE’S, “WAR” WITH SCIENCE

Taking science out of Genesis 1 would make the war between the bible and science much less violent, because the many of the passages that bible-opponents claim make scientific mistakes, and the ones that get the most attention, energy, and ink, are from that text. And the benefits of doing away with concordance would be many, starting with there becoming little to no need for ever-changing concordances. It would also allow us to see how God, “created” things, through scientific discovery, without the need to filter scientific data through various theological and exegetical filters. In addition, it would take away a potential stumbling block for scientifically educated inquirers and allow scientists to not have to choose one side or another in the eternal science/bible battle. And perhaps best of all, as stated above, it would take away a significant amount of the bluster from the anti-atheists who makes full use of the contradictions between Genesis 1 and science in their continual attacks on the bible.

**CONCLUSION**

It is exceedingly easy to understand the attraction of evangelical Christians to the Day Age Theory interpretation of Genesis 1. No believer wants to have to believe that the bible, “teaches lies” or, “contains errors”. The Framework Theory, in its abandoning of concordance, keeps the truth of Genesis 1 alive while doing away with the need to, “explain” it in the light of modern science. The internal evidence of a schema within Genesis 1, coupled with the crippling weaknesses of rival theories makes the Framework Theory the best model for interpreting the first chapter of God’s word. The everyday summation of Occam’s Razor, “"the simplest explanation is usually the correct one" also gives credence to the Framework Theory – it requires no need to force billions of years into ancient phraseology as in the gap theory or come up with new versions every generation as with the Day Age Theory. Though still a controversial view in the evangelical world, the many and substantial benefits of adhering to the Framework theory may one day come to fruition, if evangelical Christianity can ever cross the considerable gap from, “God can never tell lies” to, “God used an ancient science to teach his theological truths”.

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