

# THE BIBLICAL DEMAND TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

## *Ten Compelling<sup>1</sup> Exegetical<sup>2</sup> Reasons the Creation Days of Genesis are Non-24-Hour*

*"[They examined] the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."*—Acts 17:11

Every essay of mine that I reference can be accessed at my website: [www.christianityontheoffense.com](http://www.christianityontheoffense.com)

### Foreword

What irony! Scientists have in recent decades stumbled onto the earth-shaking realization that our universe **had an absolute beginning out of nothing** in the Big Bang. This discovery overthrew the previous consensus of scientists (held in absence of any evidence) that the cosmos has always existed, by replacing it with a new view of the history of the universe that is consistent with the first verse of the Bible: ***"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"*** (Genesis 1:1). To be sure, certain scientists who resist the notion of a transcendent Creator continue to attempt to explain away such a beginning. Yet careful analysis of their line of argument exposes the **fallacious nature** of their reasoning for the reason that no empirical facts are employed to support their *metaphysically-driven* agenda. The fact of the beginning of the universe stands as the most decisive *scientific* demonstration of all time in support of the God of the Bible because it logically demands a transcendent Creator in order to account for that beginning. What a fortuitous gift Christians have been given to challenge the onslaught of unbelief in our day! Yet sadly, despite the dreadful fact that Christianity is needlessly *losing* the battle for the minds of our generation to skepticism, many Christians, under the banner of *young-earth creationism* (YEC), refuse to consider this powerful apologetic tool because of their prejudicial assumption that Big Bang cosmology contradicts the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. In the face of the present spiritual battle for peoples' souls, and the woeful turn that that battle is taking, the damaging consequences of unnecessarily shunning such an apologetic weapon are so enormous as to demand our determination to wrestle in earnest with the following question:

*"Of the two major competing creation cosmologies, 1) YEC, (which in contradiction to the stricture of Romans 1:19, suppresses selected aspects of the testimony of nature which deal with matters of time-frame), on the one hand, and 2) Big Bang cosmology (which, in a manner consistent with Rom. 1:19, accepts the chronological data from science at face value) on the other, which position best fits the actual text of Genesis 1 in the original Hebrew language?"* On this matter, both interpretations must yield to the *text* of Scripture.

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<sup>1</sup> An LCMS FAQ column issues the following challenge: *"Unless there is compelling reason on the basis of the biblical texts themselves...we are to believe God created the world in six 24-hour days"* (found at [www.lcms.hughes-stl.com/pages/internal.asp?NavID=2210](http://www.lcms.hughes-stl.com/pages/internal.asp?NavID=2210)) (**boldface** mine). This paper amounts to my reply

Nevertheless, on biblical grounds I **do not agree** that the text of Genesis 1 is the only necessary criterion for reaching a valid interpretation of this passage. See my paper, *"Achieving a Coherent Picture of Genesis One."*

<sup>2</sup> "Exegesis" interprets a given biblical passage by depending solely on insights taken *out of* (note "exit") that text, as opposed to imposing insights *into* it.

## THE BIBLICAL DEMAND TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

*Ten 'Compelling' Exegetical Reasons the Creation Days of Genesis are Non-24-Hour*

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) is not an authority unto itself. According to our constitution our Synod stands *under* Holy Scripture. Subordinate to the Bible are the Lutheran Confessions, whose authority is acknowledged solely “*because*” they agree with Scripture. Synodical pronouncements are thus deemed to be legitimate only insofar as they harmonize with these standards. Accordingly that same constraint applies to **all** Synodical biblical expositors, including me. For the purposes of this paper, these principles affirm that the final arbiter on the creation days of Genesis 1 is the Holy Bible. Establishing the meaning of that chapter therefore requires facing, without prejudice, the actual evidence which that text yields. So, the question is, does this passage convey what our Synod unofficially<sup>3</sup> insists it says, namely that the creation days are 24-hours in duration? Only by a thorough and comprehensive investigation of the *text* of Genesis 1, judged against the text of the original Hebrew language,<sup>4</sup> can this question be answered. Despite the virtually unanimous assertion by LCMS leaders of their allegiance to a God-honoring view of Genesis,<sup>5</sup> they disappointingly express wholesale resistance<sup>6</sup> to engaging directly<sup>7</sup> with that text in pursuit of its answer. On the other hand, for my part, I whole-heartedly submit the thesis of this paper to the scrutiny of the Holy Bible.

In the face of powerful evidence from cosmology that the universe had an absolute beginning out of nothing<sup>8</sup> (p.14, below), the task of “comprehensive” biblical exposition (p.8,9, below), identified above, by the very definition of “truth,” must take this reality into account. So it is ironic that, in contradiction to St. Paul’s stricture in Romans 1:18-20 against “*suppress[ing] the truth*” of nature, advocates of young-earth creationism habitually pit

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<sup>3</sup> When I queried the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), Executive Director Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, referencing the statement in note 1, he quelled my concerns by replying on official letterhead (Feb. 19, 2009) that such statements “**do not, as such, constitute the official position of the Synod.**”

<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther assigned the original biblical languages higher authority than his native tongue (Walter Brandt, ed. *Luther's Works* v.45. (Fortress, 1962), p.359f). \*\* He is extensively quoted at <http://www.pajamapages.com/martin-luther-if-we-neglect-the-biblical-languages-the-gospel-will-perish/>

<sup>5</sup> See my critical review of *Bible on Beginnings*. *Lutheran Witness*. (April 2014) at my website, bottom.

<sup>6</sup> I have repeatedly attempted to engage with two of our most recent national synodical Presidents, a string of O.T. professors at our theological seminaries and universities, the director of “Issues, Etc.” radio program, “The Lutheran Witness” magazine, “Concordia Theological Review,” and several officials of synodical outreach organizations at the district level, to name only some examples. **Only** the director of the CTCR (Op. cit. (3)), and one university president (who wishes to remain anonymous!) were willing to discuss these matters. On the bright side, retired Third V.P. of the LCMS, Dr. Paul Maier highly approves of my position. Notice his recommendation of my paper, “*The Elephant Standing Between Secularists and their Receptivity to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*”

<sup>7</sup> In a personal letter to me in reaction to my request for a critique of this paper, Old Testament professor and department head, Dr. David Adams of Concordia Seminary St. Louis, MO, refused to critique a single one of my exegetical arguments in light of their actual Scriptural contexts. Instead, he employed abstract statistical analysis in order to bolster his insistence that the days of Genesis 1 must only be 24-hour duration. He also commits the error referenced in note 24.

<sup>8</sup> “*Advances in astronomy during the twentieth century...led to the discovery that the universe is not static but is expanding. [Such] discoveries thus suggested (by projecting backwards) the now generally accepted conclusion that the universe of space and time had a beginning in a finite past.*” (“A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations.” *The Natural Knowledge of God in Christian Confession and Christian Witness*. (LCMS, 2013), p.59).

their peculiar interpretation of Genesis 1 *against* the witness of nature whenever scientific data conflicts with their reading of that text.<sup>9</sup> The consequences of their error discredit the very Scriptures they seek to defend, even while they suppress the strongest scientific evidence which supports the biblical claim that God is the Maker of heaven and earth. Yet the text of Genesis does not uphold the young-earth creation (YEC) position. Though Martin Luther embraced the 24-hour-day view, he acknowledged that the text of Genesis 1 is “*difficult to understand*.”<sup>10</sup> In truth, a host of examples in the *Hebrew* text (which is **mistranslated** 9 times in the English Standard Version)<sup>11</sup> yield many details (double-underlined below) that are **not consistent** with the YEC view. These features are not obscure, but are instead open to public investigation.<sup>12</sup> In the same spirit which inspired Martin Luther to initiate the Reformation bearing his name,<sup>13</sup> I likewise urge readers to thoroughly review that text so as to avoid the charge of suppressing the truth of *Scripture!*

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<sup>9</sup> “Back to Genesis” founder Ken Ham says the stars were created on day four a few thousand years ago just because “*the Bible says so*.” (AM 820, Seattle, WA. 09/20/06). \*\* For a cosmic-scale refutation of his minimalistic timeframe see pp. 9-10 of my paper, above. \*\* For evidence from ice core samples on Earth measuring back over 700,000 years, see both [www.reasons.org/deep-core-tests-age-earth](http://www.reasons.org/deep-core-tests-age-earth), \*\* and Hugh Ross. *A Matter of Days*, 2<sup>nd</sup> expanded ed. (Reasons to Believe, 2015), pp. 191-2.

<sup>10</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, ed. *Luther's Works: Genesis*, v.1. (Concordia, 1958), p.3. All citations of Luther's Works (below) are American Edition. I judge that Luther's interpretation of the creation days as 24-hour virtually **excludes any reflection at all on exegetical considerations**. His insistence on the 24-hour-days in Genesis 1 instead rests almost entirely on his **unwarranted** equating of all departures from his view as embracing allegory (p. 233). That posture commits the *black or white fallacy*, which excludes the possibility of treating the day-age position (my view) as an interpretation that takes the Genesis 1 creation account as historical too.

To such concerns, Luther, having expressed dismay over his inadequate training in Hebrew, stated, “*If through our neglect we let the [knowledge of the biblical] languages go...we shall lose the Gospel. Experience... has proved this and still gives evidence for it. For as soon as the languages declined to the vanishing point, after the apostolic age, the Gospel and faith, and Christianity itself declined more and more...Here belongs also what St. Paul calls for in 1 Corinthians 14, namely, that in the Christian church all teachings must be judged. For this a knowledge of the language is needful above all else.*” Walter Brandt. Op.cit (4), p.359f.

In this essay foreign words are identified respectively as either Hebrew (“Hb”), or Greek (“Gk”).

<sup>11</sup> Although the English Standard Version (ESV) claims to be “*an essentially literal*” Bible translation that is “*carefully weighed against the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek to ensure the fullest accuracy*” (*Lutheran Study Bible: ESV*, (Concordia Publishing, 2009), p.XV.), the following **eleven discrepancies** raise important questions about that claim: **1)** In Genesis 1:2 the decisive conjunction, “*and*,” is missing even though it is present in the Hebrew. **2,3)** In Gen. 1:5, two errors are involved. First there is a definite article which is not present in the Hebrew. Also, the term “*first day*” should be translated “*day “1”*” (*yom echad* Hb) since it is a cardinal number (*echad*), **not** an ordinal (*rosh* Hb). **4,5,6,7)** There should be No definite article for days 2 through 5 since it is omitted in the Hebrew. They should instead be translated “**a second day...**, **a third day...**,” etc. **8)** In Gen. 2:4b the definite article (“**the earth and the heavens**.”) is used twice even though it is **not** present in the Hebrew. **9)** Although Daniel 8:26, is translated as “the evenings and the mornings,” the Hebrew, text to the contrary, employs these nouns in the **singular**. This point is significant for the reason that YECs consistently argue that the “*evening...morning*” refrain signals the “bound[ing]” of expressly 24-hour days (see the LSB (above) note on Genesis 1:5). I reply to the contrary that in this instance the span of time recalled in the singular “*evening*” and “*morning*” vision in Daniel 8:26 actually spans several centuries, as implied earlier in 8:20,21. \*\* In order to address the above mistakes I have assembled my own translation of Genesis 1:1-2:4, and commentary titled, *A Hebrew-Faithful Translation of Genesis 1*.

Significantly, regarding Charles Darwin's attempted disproof of the Genesis account and his consequent assertion that he thereby logically disproved the God of Genesis, Rabbi Hillel Goldberg writes, “*The Genesis that Darwin [attempted to disprove] does not exist, the English renderings he refuted do not, in critical details, reflect the Hebrew.*” (“*Genesis, Cosmology, and Evolution*,” found at <http://www.ou.org.s3.amazonaws.com/publications/ja/5760summer/genesis.pdf>)

<sup>12</sup> Every example cited in this essay (I reference ten) can be verified at [www.scripture4all.Org/OnlineInterlinear/Hebrew\\_Index.htm](http://www.scripture4all.Org/OnlineInterlinear/Hebrew_Index.htm).

<sup>13</sup> Luther urged the priority of Scripture over tradition (in terms of authority), declaring, “*I do not accept the authority of popes and councils... My conscience is captive to the Word of God.*” (George Forell, ed. *Luther's Works*, v. 32. (Fortress, 1958), p.112f.).

## I. The following scholars embrace biblical inerrancy AND grant legitimacy to the non-24-hour-creation-day interpretation of Genesis chapter 1:

Oswald Allis, Gleason Archer, James Montgomery Boice, C. John Collins, Norman Geisler, Hank Hanegraaff, Charles Hodge, Walter Kaiser, J. Gresham Machen, Walter Martin, R.C. Sproul, R.A. Torrey, B.B. Warfield, E.J. Young, and LCMS scholars John Warwick Montgomery and Paul Maier. At the 1982 International Council on Biblical Inerrancy Summit, **not one** of the Old Testament scholars present at that event mandated that the creation “days” of Genesis 1 must mean 24-hour.<sup>14</sup>

## II. Genesis 1:1 declares the beginning of the entire universe out of nothing.

God created the entire heavens and the earth **prior** to Day One. He *further* fashioned (*katartisthai* Gk. -- Heb. 11:3) His handiwork over a span of six “days” (Gen.1: 2f).<sup>15</sup>

**A.** Verse 1 is **NOT a heading**.<sup>16</sup> To the contrary it lies *within* the narrative by announcing the making of the heavens and the earth as **God’s first creative act** which was **prior to the first creation day**. The suggestion that God merely **refashioned** matter from pre-existing material<sup>17</sup> is flawed. The noun *bereshith* Hb (not *beyom* Hb) in the perfect tense consists of the noun, *reshith* Hb. (beginning) and the preposition *be* Hb. (in). Even absent the definite article, *ha* Hb. (the), the traditional translation of an absolute beginning is secure.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, *bereshith bara Elohim hashamaim vaha’aretz* Hb. is correctly translated, “*In the beginning God created...*”

**B.** The view that **v.1** begins the narrative is further affirmed by the conjunction *waw* Hb. (“and”) that begins v.2. The clause, “**And the earth,**” (*We ha aretz* Hb.) suggests both continuity with, and clarification of, the creation event begun in v.1.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> David Hagopian, ed. The Genesis Debate. (Crux Press, 2001), p.79, n.13.

<sup>15</sup> William G.T. Shedd. Dogmatic Theology. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (P&R, 2003), pp. 371f.

<sup>16</sup> See my paper, “How Genesis 1:1 Easily Accommodates the Big Bang.”

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Ezra translates *bereshith* as a construct (dependent clause), “**When God began to create...**” Yet Edward J. Young rules out that grammatical assessment (Studies in Genesis One. (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1975), pp.1-5) by stating that the unique meaning of *bara*, found in the qal stem, won’t allow it. He notes the fact that “*with no exceptions the ancient versions construed [bereshith] as an absolute*” (p.5). \*\* Likewise C. John Collins roundly rebuts the position Ezra (above) represents on a host of grounds. (Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary. (P&R, 2006), pp. 50-55). \*\* In addition, the Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament translates Genesis 1:1, “*en arche epoiaysen ho theos*” Gk: “*In the beginning God made [created]...*” ([sepd.biblos.com/genesis/1.htm](http://sepd.biblos.com/genesis/1.htm)).

<sup>18</sup> Alexander Heidel states with reference to Genesis 1:1, “[Hebrew] terms like *reshith*, ‘beginning,’ *rosh*, ‘beginning,’ *qedem*, ‘olden times,’ and *olam*, ‘eternity,’ when used in adverbial expressions occur almost invariably without the article [even] in the absolute state.” (Babylonian Genesis. (U. of Chicago, 1969), p.96).

<sup>19</sup> Heidel notes that 1:1 cannot be a heading for the reason that the copula (*waw*) in 1:2 cannot attach itself to a heading. (Ibid, p.92). \*\* Also, Claus Westermann. Genesis 1-11. (Fortress, 1984), p.95. \*\* J. Weingreen. A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew. (Oxford, 1959), pp.90-95. \*\* Paul Zimmermann, ed., Raymond Surburg. “*In the Beginning God Created.*” Darwin, Evolution, and Creation. (Concordia, 1959), p.47. The grammatical structure that begins 1:2 is the *waw conjunctive*,” which means that it modifies the conditions of 1:1 as opposed to following it consecutively as though it is a later stage in a development.

**C.** In v.2 the **earth already exists** as initially “*formless and void*” (though not chaotic). Were it not already existent, no mention of the creation of either the earth or the heavens would appear *within* the actual creation *narrative* of Genesis 1.

**D.** Since v. 1 gives **priority to the heavens** (*hashamaim* Hb) over the earth (*ha'aretz* Hb.), it also follows that the heavens,<sup>20</sup> at the very beginning of creation, have *substantive* existence which includes the stars, sun, and moon.

**E.** The unique linguistic order (verb in perfect tense followed by its object) in these verses further emphasizes the **completion of the actions** they describe.<sup>21</sup>

### III. Eleven times, five biblical writers declare that the heavens are **expanding**

**Job** 9:8 (“[God] alone stretched out the heavens”). Also **Psalms** 104:2; **Isaiah** 40:22; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12; 48:13; 51:13; **Jeremiah** 10:12; 51:15, and **Zechariah** 12:1.

### IV. The vocabulary and grammar of Genesis 1 supports **NON-24-hour days**

**A.** The *primary* meaning of the Hebrew noun *yom* is a 24-hour-day. Yet like the English word *day*, (which expresses a range of meanings) *yom* also was employed in Scripture to convey varying degrees of literalness.<sup>22</sup> For example Isaiah renders the indefinite time-span indicated in Is. 2:2 with *yom* in 2:11-12 in its emphatic form.

**B.** The absence of the definite article *ha* Hb (the) for the first five days (“*Day 1...a 2nd day...a 3rd day*”, etc.) in *prose* narrative renders them as **indefinite periods**.<sup>23</sup>

**C.** The description of the natural *on-going process* of the entire *life-cycle* of trees from their germinating *out of the ground* (v. 11a), up through their producing fruit *over the course of time*<sup>24</sup> (v.12b), further suggests Day 3 was non-24-hour.

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<sup>20</sup> “Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary.” *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*. (Thomas Nelson, 2001), p.284. \*\* Longman and Garland, ed. *Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Genesis - Leviticus, v.1*. John Sailhamer. “Genesis.” (Zondervan, 2008.), p.53.

<sup>21</sup> John Collins notes that such verbs which begin a biblical narrative normally describe events completed at the beginning of the story line (*Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary*. (P&R, 2006), p.51. \*\* The late LCMS professor Paul Zimmerman conceded in an address at the N.W. District conv. in June of 1964, “If [Gen :1:1,2 lies] outside of the limits of the first day and indicates a preliminary activity, then certainly **a great amount of time** may be included in this verse” (boldface mine). “*The Christian and Science*.” *Bible-Science Newsletter*. (Caldwell, Idaho). \*\* Zimmermann. Op.cit. (19), pp. 47, 161,165.

<sup>22</sup> On this point Luther committed the *Black-or-White* fallacy by insisting that defining a creation “day” as longer than a 24-hour period must entail allegorizing (Op.cit. 10), p.121.). Such a charge, amounting to a *complete denial* of the historicity of the events described, misrepresents the “day-age” position.

<sup>23</sup> Gary Pratico and Miles van Pelt. *Basics of Biblical Hebrew, Grammar*. (Zondervan, 2007), p.40. \*\* The Orthodox Jewish community states that the creation days may well entail “eons,” or “epochs” (ou.org/about/judaism/sheshet.htm).

<sup>24</sup> “*oseh p’ree* Hb.” (“*tree bearing*,” as opposed to “*tree that bears*”), is a *qal fientive* (predicative) participle. The grammatical structure of this description of a completed event (as opposed to command -- v.12a), specifically emphasizes **process** as opposed to static quality. See Ronald Williams. *Williams’ Hebrew Syntax*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. (University of Toronto, 2007), sec. 221, p.90, \*\* and Bill Arnold, etc. *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. (Cambridge, 2003), p.78.

**D. The implied prior passage of time (ch. 2:5, 23) and the lengthy list of activi-ties accomplished by Adam, suggests Day 6 was non-24-hour.**

**E. The Seventh Day does not close with an “evening...morning” refrain at all for the reason that it instead continues into the present (Heb. ch. 3-4).**

**F. The “evening...morning” creation day refrain is NOT a “binder”<sup>25</sup> for enclosing events (indeed were that Moses’ purpose, it would amount to clumsily highlighting the wrong time-period; *night!*<sup>26</sup>). While “evening” begins a 24-hour day, “morning” **does not close it** (by any definition). Solar days according to Leviticus 23:32, extend “*from evening to evening*” (*mae erev ad erev* Hb.). But nowhere in Scripture are 24-hour days distinguished by employing phraseology containing the words “evening” and “morning” in that order. Indeed, YECs’ **every** appeal to similar phrases elsewhere<sup>27</sup> to support 24-hour days either illegitimately **1) reverses** these terms, or **2) highlights** the duration **3) of human** (as opposed to “God”)<sup>28</sup> activities.**

## V. **Genesis 2:4 and Moses’ latitude in his usage of the word “yom” (day)**

Two examples in a single verse that challenge the 24-hour-creation-day-view close the creation narrative and bear directly on Moses’ use of the word *yom*:

*“These are (the) generations [ayleah toledoth Hb.] of the heavens and the earth when they were created.  
In (the) day [beyom Hb.] that the LORD God made earth and heavens...” (Gen. 2:4).*

Notice that the concluding summation<sup>29</sup> (2:4a) of the events of Genesis 1 measures the stages of the creation week as “generations” (toledoth Hb.) rather than “days.” Yet in contrast, notice that 2:4b states that the making of the earth and heavens took place **not in 7 days, but in one day**<sup>30</sup> of a kind that entailed an indefinite period of time (cf. Isaiah 2:11,12, etc).

<sup>25</sup> I dispute the Lutheran Study Bible judgment that this refrain is “a 24-hour day bounded by an evening and a morning.” (Op.cit. (11). note on Genesis 1:5).

<sup>26</sup> John Collins. Op.cit. (21), p.77.

<sup>27</sup> See Exodus 16:8,12,13; 18:13,14; 27:21; 29:31,41; 49:27, Lev. 6:20; 24:3; 18:13; 27:21, Lev. 6:20; 24:3, Numbers 9:21; 28:4, Deut. 28:67, 1 Kings 17:6, 2 Kings 16:15, 1 Chron. 16:40; 23:30, 2 Chron. 2:4; 13:11; 31:3, Ezra 3:3. Job 4:20, Psalms 55:17; 65:8; 90:6, Ecc. 11:6. Notice the uniqueness of Daniel 8:14, 25.

<sup>28</sup> Although YECs object that the Bible consistently uses *yom* in the 24-hour sense, once *God* becomes the subject of the activity, that objection is disarmed.

<sup>29</sup> While some dispute this designation on the grounds that by standard usage elsewhere in Genesis the word “generations” pertains to *human* descendants, their insistence *here* faces insuperable difficulties. Gerhard von Rad makes clear that the contents of 2:4a is a **summation of the preceding chapter in Genesis**. (Westminster, 1961), p.63,70. The context of 2:4a clearly is the creation (*bara*) of the entire cosmos (1:1), **not** the unfolding of the lives of Adam and his descendants. The actual superscription pertaining to the “*generations of Adam*” only appears later in 5:1. In addition, 2:4b refers back to cosmic creation too.

<sup>30</sup> While some translate *beyom* Hb (“in the day”) as “when” in Gen. 2:4b. W. von Soden (citing that passage as his example), notes that “*the basic meaning ‘day’ need not be totally absent.*” (J. Botterweck, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, v.7. (Eerdmans, 1990), p.15). \*\* And Bill Arnold. Op.cit. (24), p.103. \*\* Three other instances of *beyom* being consistently translated as “day”, as opposed to “when” include “*on the seventh day*” (2 times in Genesis 2:2), and “*in the day you eat...*” (Gen. 2:17). Notice additionally that the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Hebrew Old Testament also affirms the “day” (as opposed to the “when”) aspect of *beyom* in 2:4b: “*hote egeneto hay haymera epoiaysen ho theos*” Gk., which reads, “*when it happened the day God made.*” (Op.cit. (17).

## VI. The age of creation and the omnipotent power of God

The question of God's omnipotence in regard to creation is in no way challenged in this essay. It instead addresses what the record of nature tells us God in freedom *chose* to do. As we gaze upward into the heavens, it is apparent that He chose to grant us a *moving* display, like the *unfolding progression* of a firework from its initial launch all the way to its bursting open. The multi-billion-year-unfolding of the heavens, revealed by the Big Bang (see p. 14, below) may well be God's *deliberate* means of testifying to His own creative power!

Since God is independent of time (Ps. 90:4)<sup>31</sup> He can *either* create instantaneously, or in stages entailing time, whether over six 24-hour days, or in billions of years. In either case God said, "*Let there be,*" and space and time unfolded from out of nothingness (Hebrews 11:3).

## VII. The phrase, "after their kind," special creation, and the day-age position

Darwinists gain no support from the Big Bang (BB) even though they are seeking refuge in its multi-billion-year timeframe. Yet the Big Bang actually undermines Darwinism because our cosmos, with its' demonstrated **beginning** (p.14, below), lacks the infinity of time Darwinists have habitually depended on in order for macro-evolution to fully play itself out.<sup>32</sup> The scientific consensus on the age of the universe is **vastly too short** for even the simplest living cell to appear *naturalistically*.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the notion of an "amoeba-to-man" evolution of life is challenged by the utter lack of transitional fossils in the historical record.<sup>34</sup> At the same time it should be noted that the language of Genesis One is descriptive ("phenomenal"), not analytical. Three separate times the actual text of Genesis ch. 1 conveys God's creation as a process unfolding, in some way, *within and through* natural processes. Notice for example, the grammatical subject of Genesis 1:11 (*tedoshe ha-aretz*. Hb. -- "*Let the earth bring forth*"). See also both 1:20 and 24.

## VIII. Aristotle, Genesis, and the challenge of a Day-Four creation of the sun

We should not be surprised to discover that Luther ranked among the list of *sun-on-day-four* creationists. In Luther's time (1483-1546) Copernicus was just beginning to

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<sup>31</sup> How ironic that implications following from Einstein's Theory of General Relativity are closer, theologically, to the God of the Bible who transcends space, matter, energy, and **time** than are Christians who confuse an old cosmos with the inferior working of a less-than-omnipotent God. See Hebrews 11:3, which declares that God fashioned the ages (*aionas* Gk); that is, time itself, by His own command (*hrayma* Gk).

<sup>32</sup> Sir Arthur Eddington wrote of the Big Bang, "*I should like to find a genuine loop-hole,*" and, "*We [must] allow evolution an **infinite time** to get started*" (boldface mine). Cited in Hugh Ross. Creator and the Cosmos. (NavPress, 1995, p.77.

<sup>33</sup> Fuzale Rana and Hugh Ross. "*A Slow or Sudden Arrival?*" Origins of Life. (Reasons to Believe, 2014), p.85f.

<sup>34</sup> Stephen C. Meyer. Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design. (Harper One, 2013).

publish his heliocentric (sun-at-center) notion that the earth revolves around the sun (1543).<sup>35</sup> For the 1,700 years from Aristotle (384-322 BC) leading up to Luther (and beyond), virtually all *scientists* shared the belief inherited from Ptolemy (though ultimately grounded on Aristotle's philosophical *insistence* that earth *must* be the center of the cosmos).<sup>36</sup> Copernicus' new perspective (based on *abstract* mathematics) required further investigation before it would be convincingly entertained by academia. Only with Galileo a hundred years later did *unambiguous* evidence *begin* (he still lacked *decisive* empirical data) to surface so as to overturn the prevailing worldview that had thus far securely rested on common sense and reason. After all, at that time everything their five *senses* had told them said that the earth was stationary; not rotating at (their equivalent of 1,000 mph) at the equator and rapidly shooting around the sun. This is indeed exactly how our *senses* experience the same world today! Furthermore Copernicus' mathematical formulas regarding the predictability of planetary orbits hardly improved on Ptolemy's celestial predictions.<sup>37</sup> Far from battling reason, Luther actually praised astronomy and the investigations of the natural philosophers (distinguishing it from astrology) as a worthy field of knowledge that is distinct from theology.<sup>38</sup> So, as for his apparent resistance to Copernicus,<sup>39</sup> it wasn't *established* facts that Luther opposed, but instead, a hypothesis that was both *counterintuitive* and widely regarded in his day to be **unproven**.

As for the text itself, firstly, v.14, "...*let the lights in the expanse of the sky be for...*" (*yehee morot beroqi hashamayim lehabdil* Hb) assumes the **prior existence** (1:1) of the lights (1:16).<sup>40</sup> The Hebrew verbs that mark their appearance do NOT include *bara* (1:1), but four separate weaker words which collectively mean to *make* or *cause to appear*. Dr. Archer translates 1:14 as, "*Let luminaries in the firmament of heaven be for the purpose of separating between day and night, in order that they may be for signs.*" That is, the

<sup>35</sup> Pelikan. Op.cit. (10), p.4f. \*\* Theodore Tappert, ed. Luther's Works: Table Talk, v.54. (Fortress, 1967), # 4638.

<sup>36</sup> David Lind berg, editor, and author, "*Galileo, the Church, and the Cosmos.*" When Christianity & Science Meet. University of Chicago Press, 2003), p.33-60.

<sup>37</sup> Rodney Stark. For the Glory of God. (Princeton, 2003), pp.137f.

<sup>38</sup> Gary Ferngren., ed. Owen Gingerich. "The *Copernican* Revolution." Science & Religion. (John Hopkins, 2002), p.98f suggested Luther's opposition to reason. \*\* But consider his statements to the contrary in Pelikan, ed. Luther's Works: Ecclesiastes, v.15. (Concordia 1972), p.18, \*\* and Pelikan. Op.cit. (10), p. 41, where he wrote that "*the astronomers are the experts [on the sun and moon] from whom it is most convenient to get what may be discussed about these subjects.*" Also p. 47.

<sup>39</sup> Tappert. Op.cit. (35), # 4638. \*\* Luther praises those who listen to arguments which challenge them. LW, vol. 25, p. 237.

<sup>40</sup> John Sailhamer distinguishes between the simple phrase, "*Let there be,*" in 1:6 on the one hand, and 1:14 on the other, which by contrast says, "*Let the lights... be for signs and for seasons.*" He notes that the latter adds the word *lehabdil* Hb: "*Let the lights be for the purpose of separating*" (the prepositional prefix *le* Hb is translated "*to*" or "*for,*"). This theme of purpose is emphasized by repetitive use of the preposition **11 times** in Day 4. (Longman and Garland, ed. Expositor's Biblical Commentary: Genesis – Leviticus, v.1. John Sailhamer. Genesis. (Zondervan, 2008), p.64f.).



two lights (together with the entire heavens) already created prior to *day one* (II.D, above) finally shone through a newly dissipated atmosphere that had been darkened (1:2).<sup>41</sup>

Second, Hebrew *grammar* allows an alternative to a Day-four-creation of the sun. Dr. Archer notes that the Hebrew verb, “*wayya ’as*” (v.16) can legitimately point back to Gen. 1:1 as the time God “*had made*” [or *has made*]...the two lights.<sup>42</sup> Hebrew tenses are, from our perspective, ambiguous in terms of chronology since they serve a different purpose from English by dealing with the status of the completion (or non-completion) of the action at hand, rather than its time-perspective (past, present, future, etc.).

Oswald Allis sheds light on this discussion with his observation that the sequence in which events in the Bible are recorded *may not be strictly chronological*. He writes, “*We find in describing an event, the Biblical writer first makes a brief and comprehensive statement and then follows it with more or less elaborate details.*” Among his list of examples he cites the statement, “*And God made the two great lights and stars,*” from Genesis 1:16.<sup>43</sup> So it is significant that the *stated*<sup>44</sup> reason in Genesis for the appearance of the lights in 1:14 wasn’t to mark their beginning *per se*, but to announce their newly unveiled *purpose* to act as time-markers!: “***in order to separate [l’hebdil** Heb.] the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons*” (boldface mine).

Indeed, if it were actually true that the sun and moon were created on Day Four, then only three days out of the seven (days 4, 5, and 6) can be treated as “normal” days. The terms *day, evening, and morning*, on days 1, 2, and 3 **cannot be taken in their “normal” usage** without the existence of the sun.

## IX. Challenges to the “day-age” position answered

**Objection:** “Even *liberal* scholars who deny the inspiration of Scripture assert<sup>45</sup> that the Bible intends the creation periods of Genesis 1 to be understood as 24-hour days.”

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<sup>41</sup> Gleason Archer. *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. (Moody, 1974), p.188. \*\* Gerald Schroeder references Nahmanides (b. 1194) as appealing to this view. *Genesis and the Big Bang*. (Bantam, 1992), p. 130.

<sup>42</sup> Gleason Archer. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. (Zondervan, 1982), p.61. \*\* Sailhamer advances on Archer’s argument on the basis of the close of v.15, which says, “*And it was so.*” That passage amounts to a concluding assessment of God’s completed day-4 “work.” What follows grammatically after that statement in v.16 (“*And God made two great lights*”) is not a continuation of the narrative, but instead constitutes a summary *theological* declaration *about* that narrative that brings readers back to what happened “*in the beginning*” in Gen.1:1. (Op.cit. (40), p.65).

<sup>43</sup> Oswald Allis. *The Old Testament: Its' Claims and its' Critics*. (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1972), pp. 82, 87.

<sup>44</sup> “*It is one of the **more than human** qualities of Holy Scripture that while written by men whose knowledge was in accordance with their times, it does not contradict the increased knowledge of later times*” (R. Payne Smith. *Genesis*. (Cassell, 1882), p.66). Boldface mine.

<sup>45</sup> One such scholar, Hebrew Professor James Barr, concedes both that his own position rests less on “*textual linguistic competence*” than it does his presumption of what “*sort of text that Genesis is,*” and that “*most professors may avoid much involvement in that sort of argument.*” ([members.iinet.net.au/~sejones/barrlett.html](http://members.iinet.net.au/~sejones/barrlett.html)).

**Reply:** My essay argues that determining a correct biblical interpretation is not achieved by appealing to majority vote, but by directly assessing the specific relevant exegetical data. Section IV: A-F, above, specifies my evidence which counters their assertion.

**Objection:** “The fact that the creation days are *numerated* proves they are 24-hour.”

**Reply:** Dr. Geisler states that no such rule pertaining to the Hebrew language exists.<sup>46</sup>

**Objection:** “The statement, ‘*For in six days,*’ in both Ex. 20:11 and 31:17 proves that the creation days of Genesis are of 24-hour duration.”

**Reply:** The absence of the preposition *be* Hb (“*in*”) in both of the Hebrew texts supports the notion that God made (*asah* Hb) of “*the heavens and the earth*” over the course of “six days.”<sup>47</sup> Yet while duration is implied by this construct (*Hebrew accusative of time*), that fact does not require that “six days” mean *24-hour* days. It is significant that in both of these cases **no definite article** attaches to the word “*day*” (IV-B, above). Their absence implies that the emphasis wasn’t their *length*, but the **ratio** 6-1 (God’s six creation periods to one day of worship). Similarly, God assigned 40 years of wandering in the wilderness for Israel’s 40 days of disobedience at Kadesh Barnea (Num. 14:34, Lev. 25:3, 4).

**Objection:** “The assertion that the earth is both “ancient” [notice Gen. 49:26, Deut. 33:15, Hab. 3:6] and replete with animal death *contradicts* the Bible’s interpretation of Adam’s fall.”

**Reply:** To the contrary, the Bible **never connects** death across nature *in general* with the sin of Adam. Neither do the Lutheran Confessions, even once. Rather, the Apostle Paul indicates that the curse of death as a consequence of the Fall of Adam (1 Cor. 15: 21, 22), is **limited specifically to the human family**. As he also writes, elsewhere:

“*And so death spread to all men [eis pantas anthropous Gk.] because all sinned*” (Romans 5:12—boldface mine).

The notification in Genesis 3:16 that Adam’s sin would cause pain to “*multiply*” (*charebah arebeh* Hb.) implies that pain already existed **prior to** his fall. Indeed, in one creation text (Psalm 104:21) King David celebrated lions seeking and finding their prey as a gift from God’s hand, implying the *natural* existence of death among animals. Studied reflection on the words (*mataios* and *phoras*) in Rom. 8:20 actually underscores the point that Adam’s fall did **not** entail the introduction of death *per se* into the animal kingdom.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> So states Dr. Norman Geisler. Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics. (Baker, 1999), p.271.

<sup>47</sup> Theophile James Meek, U. of Toronto. *The Hebrew Accusative of Time and Place*. [http://www.jstor.org/stable/594010?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/594010?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

<sup>48</sup> In contradiction to Jonathan Scarfati’s article, “The Fall: A Cosmic Catastrophe,” (<http://creation.com/the-fall-a-cosmic-catastrophe>), O. Bauernfiend writes that *mataios* (as opposed to *kenos* Gk.) “denotes the world of appearance as distinct from that of being.” Gerhard Kittel, ed. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, v.4, (Eerdmans, 1967), p.519. \*\* R.C.H. Lenski agrees (Interpretation of Romans. (Augsburg, 1945), p.533f.) \*\* Luther too understood Romans 8:20 to refer to disarray that human sin imposes onto nature, as opposed to *metaphysically* transforming it. (H. Oswald, ed., Luther’s Works: Lectures on Romans, v.25. (Concordia, 1972), p.361f). \*\* The Septuagint (Gk) version of Ecclesiastes 1:2 translates the very same word, *mataios* as “vanity.” \*\* Likewise, when Rom. 8:21

**Objection.** “It is illegitimate to harmonize Scripture with science.”

**Reply:** No, it is not. To harmonize is **not** to compromise. Harmonizing becomes compromise only when truth is sacrificed. Yet the ten exegetical challenges highlighted in this essay ought to moderate the dogmatic certitude of the adherents to the 24-hour-day reading. The Bible nowhere forbids the harmonizing of itself with evidence from nature and history. Truth by standard definition demands the *de facto* correlation of the revelation of both nature and Scripture. To the extent these agree, the Bible is vindicated. When they are demonstrated to be in actual conflict, the Bible is by definition falsified **unless** the scientific/historical challenge is legitimately answered. These are the two sides of that risk which follows the bold claim (as I affirm!) that the Book of Genesis is the revealed Word of God. The Bible in principle accepts this challenge (Isaiah 40:21-26; 44:9-20, Deuteronomy 13:1-5). Where the claims of Scripture intersect with science, the interpreter must fit them together *credibly*<sup>49</sup> rather than theologically dismissing troubling evidence out-of-hand. The advancement of the Gospel is hindered when it is aligned with an over-thrown worldview that flies in the face of demonstrated scientific facts. Augustine warns:

*“Now, it is a disgraceful and dangerous thing for an infidel to hear a Christian, presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talking nonsense on these topics; and we should take all means to prevent such an embarrassing situation, in which people show up vast ignorance in a Christian and laugh it to scorn.”<sup>50</sup>*

Resistance to the altering of “biblical”<sup>51</sup> interpretation in the face of new scientific discoveries damaged the witness of the Church when Galileo was seeking to present his insights in astronomy before its leaders.<sup>52</sup> Because of Psalm 93:1,<sup>53</sup> many (not all) of them resisted his claim that the earth circles the sun. Yet following upon his vindication, such erroneous views began to give way. The reality that all people *now* repudiate such archaic interpretations ought to temper the certitude of young-earth creationists today.<sup>54</sup>

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states that “*creation was subject to ‘corruption,’*” it is *phthoras* Gk (“corruption”) rather than *thnatos* Gk. (“death” or “mortality”) that is used. This definition is consistent with the use of the same word, employed 3 times, in Genesis 6:11,12 in the Septuagint (Op.cit. (16)). See also C. John Collins. Op.cit. (21), p.182,3.

<sup>49</sup> John Warwick Montgomery. “*The Theologian’s Craft.*” *The Suicide of Christian Theology.* (Bethany, 1970), p.267f. \*\* Either these two agree in *actuality*, or they do not harmonize, period! \*\* LCMS scientist John Klotz writes correctly that our faith “*cannot go contrary to science and reason and observation...There must be a basic unity between [scientific] facts and truth as it is given to us in revelation.*” (*Modern Science and the Christian Life.* (Concordia, 1962), p. 79, note also.137f).

<sup>50</sup> Augustine. *The Literal Meaning of Genesis.* J.H. Taylor, S.J. tr. v.l. (Newman 1982), p.42f.

<sup>51</sup> Traditional “biblical” interpretation at the time was overwhelmingly influenced by Aristotle’s cosmology. See Gary Ferngren. Op.cit. (38).

<sup>52</sup> David Lindberg and Ronald Numbers, ed. Op.cit. (37).

<sup>53</sup> Significantly, this cosmological view was embraced also because of the firm grip of Aristotle’s *pagan* geocentric paradigm over the thinking of both the Church and the entire (scientific) community. See Dennis Danielson, ed. *The Book of the Cosmos.* “*The Potency of Place: Aristotle.*” (Perseus, 2002), pp.37-42).

<sup>54</sup> Even into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, LCMS theologian Francis Pieper (*Christian Dogmatics*, v.l. (Concordia, 1950)) rejected Copernicus’ heliocentric position (p. 473).

On the other hand, science is now **affirming** what the Bible had declared over 2000 years ago, thereby demonstrating the supernatural nature of biblical revelation:

- The universe had an **absolute beginning** in the Big Bang (Genesis 1:1).
- The pattern of creation in Genesis 1 **matches the findings of science**,<sup>55</sup> and separates itself from the pagan mythology of its neighbors and friends.<sup>56</sup>
- **No new matter** is being created (Gen. 2:1) — 1<sup>st</sup> law of thermodynamics.
- The cosmos **operates under fixed laws** (Jeremiah 33:25).
- The **universe is expanding** (pt. III above) — The Big Bang.
- The total number of **stars** (counted in the night sky as just a few thousand) is indirectly revealed as **almost innumerable** (Gen. 22:17, Jeremiah 33:22).
- **Stars differ** from each other by the elements they contain (1 Cor.15:41).<sup>57</sup>
- **Time** (“*aionas*” Gk. i.e. “eons”) **began at creation** (Heb. 11:3). — Einstein (Relativity).
- The universe is **running down** (Isaiah 40:6) — 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics.

## X. The command to test God’s existence against the witness of nature

18. *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men, who by their wickedness, suppress the truth. 19. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20. Ever since the creation of the universe His invisible nature, namely His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that He has made, so they are without excuse.”*

—Rom.1:18-20

### Four implications logically follow from St. Paul’s above declaration:

1. **Nature is not deceptive**, but tells the truth about God’s power (v.18, 19).
2. **Nature testifies** to the existence of the Creator, and humans are held accountable (v.18,20) for the conclusions drawn about God from nature.
3. The suggestion that nature is unreliable testimony **diminishes** human **culpability** (“*so they are without excuse*”) for its disbelief in God (v. 20). It also

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<sup>55</sup> Gerald Schroeder. *“The Days of Genesis.” The Science of God.* (Free Press, 1995), p.60f.

<sup>56</sup> Contrast Genesis 1 with the Babylonian *“Enuma Elish.”* See Alexander Heidel. *Op.cit.* (18), p.1f.

<sup>57</sup> Hugh Ross. *Why the Universe is the Way It Is.* (Baker, 2008), p.44.

has implications with respect to the character of God who demands our making connections between the testimony of nature and His existence.

4. The refusal to test Scripture against the reality of nature is not biblical.

Indeed, **nowhere** does the Bible ever command us to reject the witness of nature as a test of our belief in the truth of God's Word. 2 Kings 6:15, occasionally cited for to support that inference, to the contrary calls us to believe in a *spiritual* realm *above* nature ("*an army of horses and chariots*"), not to reject nature *per se*.

Since scientists are flawed humans just like the rest of us, it is legitimate to grant their tendency to at times err in judgment (even as Bible scholars will at times err in their/our *interpretations* of Scripture). We are even justified in charging certain scientists with materialistic prejudice. Yet at bottom their bias must be confronted with the checks and balances of scientific data, not merely with a dose of one's own flawed *theological* bias. None of the charges leveled against flawed and "ungodly" science are credible so long as they rest on abstractions alone.<sup>58</sup> Critics are obligated to actually confront and rebut the *specific* scientific evidence they are calling into question.<sup>59</sup>

My essay, "*The Prints are Everywhere*,"<sup>60</sup> lists six *observable* facts that powerfully confirm the truth of an absolute beginning. This evidence is rigorously confirmed by repeated testing. The *continuous* parade of *new* discoveries contributes to the mounting stack of confirmatory evidence. Therefore the Big Bang cannot be explained away by appealing to the record of overturned scientific theories in general for the reason that the evidence in favor of Big Bang cosmology is becoming more pronounced over time. What emerges fits into a visibly-inescapable pattern of a universe that is expanding out from its initial creation at moment zero.

The common objection against certitude about the history of the universe so described, namely that no one was present at that beginning,<sup>61</sup> is technically true. Yet it is also misleading and irrelevant for the reason that, because light travel represents the passage of time, **we can look all the way back to the beginning.** The distances

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<sup>58</sup> e.g. Pieper. Op.cit. (54), p.468, writes, "*Nor are [the days of Genesis] to be extended...to bring Scripture into agreement with the 'assured results' of science.*"

<sup>59</sup> The successful discrediting of Darwinism does not, in itself, undermine the reality that our cosmos is ancient. The evidence that the cosmos is billions of years old rests less on biological history than it does on the demonstrated size of the universe measured by light-travel *time* (13 billion light years back to its beginning).

<sup>60</sup> Direct observations yield the pattern that all galaxy clusters are flying away from one another and are farther apart now than they were in the past, that this expansion has been slowing down, that the universe is cooling off, and that the number of elements has increased over time from only hydrogen at the very beginning to the current total of 92 through the process of nuclear reaction. We can also see the remnant glow of the initial explosion of the Big Bang before galaxies were formed, including the necessary level of disconformity to produce stars, galaxies, and planets.

<sup>61</sup> "*Since no man was present when its pleased God to create the world, we must look for a reliable account of creation to God's own record, found in God's own book, the Bible.*" From "A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod" (1932), [lutheran-resources.org/beliefs\\_brief\\_statement\\_page.htm](http://lutheran-resources.org/beliefs_brief_statement_page.htm)

astronomers deal with (light years—henceforth “l.y.”) directly involve us in history. For example, to see to the edge of our Milky Way Galaxy at 25,000 l.y. distance, is to see that region as it was 25,000 years ago, since that’s how long its light took to reach our eyes. We can easily see our neighboring Andromeda Galaxy in binoculars (except for people with 20x20 vision) at 2¼ million l.y. away. Because of the reality of light-travel time, we are actually seeing it **not** as it *is*, but as it appeared 2 1/4 million years ago.<sup>62</sup>

The point is when we peer into the heavens we see only into the past. Our comparison of multiplied billions of galaxies at varying distances (ages and stages) reveals a progression of events over time that is comparable to our viewing a motion picture of the cycle of a blooming flower. From this pattern astronomers observe the entire 13-billion-year history of the expansion of the universe which, if reversed, takes them virtually all the way back to the very beginning of His creation. *Creatio ex nihilo!*<sup>63</sup>

As for the age of the earth, advancements in knowledge concerning plate tectonics prove that the Earth is vastly older than just a few thousand years old. For example, under-sea eruptions along mid-oceanic ridges dividing the major continental plates are continually expanding the sea beds between them a few mm. a year. What they also discovered was that “*the magnetism of the ocean floor around the mid-ocean ridges was divided into matching ‘stripes’ on each side of the ridge,*”<sup>64</sup> thereby not only proving the stretching, but also accurately measuring the ages of oceans as millions of years old.

## **XI. The interpretation of Scripture and effective “creation evangelism”**

Creation is a critical doctrine in evangelizing our pluralistic world. Yet the foundation must rest on an interpretation of Genesis which is true both to the text and to the natural world it purports to describe. Our failure to intelligently reconcile these two truth-claims undermines the openness of scientifically educated people to a serious

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<sup>62</sup> Even YEC astronomer Jason Lisle concedes that measured vast light-year distances are scientifically true and free of evolutionary assumptions. He also distances himself from the common YEC assertion that God may have added the light beams in travel ([www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab/does-starlight-prove](http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab/does-starlight-prove)). Arguing nonetheless that creation is young, he elsewhere adopts the position that light *could* travel at infinite speeds when measured from his chosen frame of reference (which he concedes is **not “testable” scientifically**). His perspective is at odds with Einstein’s general theory of relativity, which calibrates the speed of light by the testable assumption that light leaving two stars simultaneously will meet at the exact midpoint. Astrophysicist Jeff Zweerink rebuts Lisle’s paper at [www.reasons.org/articles/an-infinite-speed-of-light](http://www.reasons.org/articles/an-infinite-speed-of-light). \*\* Furthermore, the very suggestion that the speed of light has changed faces an insurmountable challenge with respect to the formula, E=MC<sup>2</sup>, since alteration of that speed even minutely alters every single physical process in the cosmos. \*\* YECs counter that hyper-inflation at creation greatly accelerated the speed of light is rebutted, again by Zweerink, on the grounds that the speed of light constant is measured in terms of travel *through* space while inflation involved the expansion of space itself *into utter nothingness*. See [www.reasons.org/multiverse-musings-does-inflation-imply-a-change-in-the-laws-of-physics](http://www.reasons.org/multiverse-musings-does-inflation-imply-a-change-in-the-laws-of-physics). The bottom line is the scientific analysis of light waves from across the entire 13+ billion-year extent of the observable universe yields no evidence of alternate physics at any time in the history of the cosmos. \*\* See also Hugh Ross. Op.cit. (9), ch. 15, pp.161-170.

<sup>63</sup> Following on Einstein’s Theory of General Relativity, Stephen Hawking stated, “*At the Big Bang, the universe and time itself came into existence*” out of a singularity (defined as zero volume). David Filkin. [Stephen Hawking’s Universe](#). (Basic, 1997), p.XIV, 112f. \*\* Also [campus.udayton.edu/~hume/Hawking/hawking\\_bio.html](http://campus.udayton.edu/~hume/Hawking/hawking_bio.html). \*\* Recently, however, Hawking has illogically walked away from that position. See my paper, “*The Prints are Everywhere,*” sec. 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Sea Floor Spreading*. “Geometric Reversals.” [nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/sea-floor-spreading/](http://nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/sea-floor-spreading/)

consideration of the Gospel in our secular age.<sup>65</sup> The day-age position reconciles these. Instead of merely *decreeing* the Bible to be without error (“*If the facts get in the way of the Bible, so much worse for the facts!*”), it *substantiates* its claim about God’s Word by demonstration that it is consistent with what scientists actually discover in nature.<sup>66</sup>

Young-earth advocates, on the other hand, raise suspicions about the Bible by their refusal to wrestle with scientific evidence that is problematic to their interpretation of Scripture. They fail to allow the scientific data as a *whole* to stand on its own but recognize only data that suits *their* purposes. Even their partially correct criticism of Darwinism is undermined by their dogma that science must be filtered through their interpretation of the Bible. Yet evidence made subservient to their religious commitments is effectively demoted to the status of a *prop*, which is an oxymoron. In order to qualify their positions as scientifically grounded they must instead allow science its rightful critique and parameters. This involves moving beyond cherry-picking for merely confirmatory evidence, to submitting their hypotheses to the *entire* array of scientific data.

I am not suggesting that scientific inquiry must be theistically hostile or even indifferent. Nor am I am challenging the power of God to *reveal* truth about the natural world. To the contrary, He can, and He did! The Bible, as the inerrant and revealed Word of the Maker of the universe, corresponds to what scientists discover in nature.

## **XII. The witness of the cosmos challenges other philosophies and theologies:**

- The atheistic belief that the cosmos is eternally self-existing is refuted by the body of evidence (p.14 above) that the cosmos had an absolute beginning out of nothing.
- Darwinian evolution is ruled out by the fact that the age of our finite cosmos is vastly too short to allow life to develop naturalistically (p.8, above).
- The pervasive fine-tuning of the universe, from the very moment of its inception, likewise undermines Darwinism since it **precedes** biological natural<sup>67</sup> selection.
- Big Bang cosmology also overthrows both the steady state and the oscillating theories of cosmology.<sup>68</sup> It thereby undermines Eastern pantheistic philosophy and the belief in infinite cycles of reincarnation.

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<sup>65</sup> See my essay, “*The Elephant Standing Between Secularists and their Receptivity to the Gospel.*”

<sup>66</sup> Robert Jastrow. *God and the Astronomers*. (Norton, 1978), \*\* Fred Heeren. *Show Me God*. (Day Star, 2000).

<sup>67</sup> Martin Rees. *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces that Shape the Universe*. (Basic, 2000).

<sup>68</sup> Hugh Ross. Op.cit. (31), p.77-98. See also [www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org).

Never in the history of human investigation has the scientific case for the existence of the God of the Bible stood on such a solid foundation as now. The Big Bang has advanced the case for God<sup>69</sup> to the level of irrefutable<sup>70</sup> *demonstration*. An exegetically valid interpretation of Scripture is fully compatible with the array of scientific discoveries that continue to mount in its support. Christians ought to seize the opportunity to proclaim with biblical *and* scientific authority the truth of the existence of the God of the Bible.

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<sup>69</sup> YEC critics of the Big Bang incorrectly attack it as though it purports to scientifically *explain* the actual beginning of the cosmos from nothing (Spike Psarris' presentation, "*The Big Bang Never Happened*," found at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-B2hACS0dQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-B2hACS0dQ)). In reality the Big Bang does not play an *explanatory* role, but instead a *descriptive* one about the absolute beginning of the universe out of nothing. It is a description of the subsequent unfolding history of the cosmos which demands that kind of explanation that science, by definition, can never, ever offer, but only the God of the Holy Bible who stands altogether outside of the material order. This fundamentally means that the beginning of the universe was a miracle. The Big Bang therefore does **not** affirm atheism but points so clearly to God as its Creator that its strongest initial opponents were atheists. See Dinesh D'Souza. "*A Universe with a Beginning*." *What's So Great about Christianity?* (Tyndale, 2007), p.121. \*\* For a contrasting view that I consider unsuccessful take notice from my paper "*The Prints*," note 3, which references Stephen Hawking absurdly resorting to the power of gravity in order to account for the existence of gravity.

<sup>70</sup> Theorists can be found who will *evade* the notion of the cosmic singularity (creation moment) by their appeal to the "multiverse hypothesis," which postulates countless parallel universes. Yet evasion is not refutation. Their appeal to the existence of other universes is utterly speculative and lacks even the possibility of empirical support. Renowned astrophysicist, Martin Rees concedes this non-evidentiary reality even though he embraces the multiverse. Op.cit. (67), p.150-51.

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