

STUDIES IN GENESIS #6

Written by Calvin Fox
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The story of chapter one is organized by Days. What are these “days”?

Day 4 describes a literal 24 hour period divided into day and night. Doesn't that require Days 5 and 6 to also be 24 hours, each divided into a day and night?

And Day 7 (the Sabbath) is also a literal day.

Exodus 20:11 and 31:17 teach us that the other days are the same as the Sabbath.

Theistic evolutionists see the Days as Epochs, each lasting thousands of years.

If so, that would mean that all living things created on those “days” would have existed in the dark and then in the light for thousands of years respectively.

Others see the use of “days” as a literary device, as scenes in a Story or acts in a Play. How long they each were would not matter.

Many say the Creation Story is a myth.

The proponents of the latter hold the view that myths are not necessarily untrue, but can be vehicles of truth such as the Narnia Tales are

Here are factors that help determine the issue. Chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis reveal theological truth- truth about God and His works. That is their primary purpose.

And that must not be lost in debate about arguable scientific theories.

It is essential that our interpretation of the passage be grounded in the reality of creation by God, particularly by His intentional Plan and actualized by His Word and Spirit - the Trinity at work. The real debate is not about so-called scientific evidence for Darwinism versus Creationism.

It is between Trinitarian Theism and Philosophical Naturalism.

We must defend the former and defeat the latter.

We must insist that there is a God; that the process of creation by God took place within History, - that the account of Creation by God as recorded in these chapters is true.

And the particular truths we take away from these verses are

- · God is the almighty Creator

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- · All that exists does so because God purposely and rationally brought it into existence
- · God constantly preserves, sustains and provides for Creation. It is totally dependent upon Him
- · All forms of life, all physical processes and changes in Creation are of God
- · All of Creation is good and serves God.

Which definition of “Days” supports and under-girds these Truths the best? Which definitions tend to undermine these truths?

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Derek Kidner, author of the Commentary on Genesis in the Tyndale series wrote- “The Creation story as it stands has been a bulwark against a succession of fashionable errors- polytheism, [pantheism, panentheism], dualism, the eternity of matter, the evil of matter, astrology and, not least, against every tendency to empty human history of meaning.”- I agree with him.

I also agree with many commentators that it is very regrettable that the debate about the length of “days” has led many Bible students on a rabbit trail away from the major truths in the chapter and into harmful, unnecessary controversy.. None of the Truths listed above require any definition of “day”. Far more important is what God did and how He did it. The main purpose served by the use of “days” (however defined) is to outline the order and sequence of God’s creative work.