

Intellectually Honest Answer to the Six Days of Genesis Dilemma

by

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Note: The writings of An Old Scientist, though technical in content are written without stilted language typical of scientific writings. This is done for the express purpose of being readable by the general public.

Abstract

Christians are faced with a dilemma.

Their good book contains a schedule of the origins that puts everything into a six-day chronology only a few thousand years ago.

For thousands of years that six-day chronology has been assumed to be the official biblical position concerning the beginnings.

A few hundred years ago a dilemma arose when modern science began discovering the six-day chronology is in conflict with reality.

Untold effort has gone into resolving the conflict, but to no avail. There have been many attempts, but until now there has been no consensus on how to reconcile the two.

Intellectually honest analysis concludes either the six-day schedule of Genesis 1 is not the true chronology, or science is wrong. None of the compromises is intellectually honest.

For decades the dilemma has been assumed to be whether to believe the bible or science.

Now an alternate chronology has been recognized. There are at least thirty-four major creation accounts in the bible, not just one up front as has been traditionally assumed.

In that myriad of biblical accounts is recorded a chronology that is not only inconsistent with the six-day chronology, it contains many more details, is consistent from account to account and consistent with reality even to the point that it predicts yet undiscovered scientific discoveries.

These are two different biblical chronologies, the six-day schedule that is found in only one account and inconsistent with both the rest of the bible and with reality, or the one found in thirty-four biblical accounts that is both internally consistent and consistent with reality.

The dilemma then becomes: Which biblical chronology is intended to be reality, and which is fiction? Under the rules of logic, opposites cannot both be true. Both could be fiction, or one could be true and the other fiction, but both could not be true; at least one must be fiction. If one is to be considered to be the official position of the bible as to the actual chronology of the origins, then which one?

In this paper are some of the evidences that the alternate biblical chronology of the beginnings is the one originally intended to be the official biblical position.

Introduction – The Dilemma

Christians are faced with a dilemma. Their good book contains the promise of eternal life; apparently under the condition that they believe what it says.

But many people just cannot get past the teaching that the bible literally says everything was created in just six twenty-four hour days only a few thousand years ago.

Doubters are told they must believe it by faith despite the evidence; even if they have to go through intellectually dishonest mental gyrations to reconcile it with reality.

But to be intellectually honest, that belief cannot be substantiated by observation of reality.

The impact has been that thousands of people cannot believe what the bible has to say about eternal life simply because they cannot, in all intellectual honesty, believe its six-day chronology of the beginnings. They simply walk away.

The Struggle for a Resolution to the Dilemma

There is a vocal group of those who cannot ignore the dilemma, but who do not want to walk away. To them the eternal benefits of believing are too great. They expend much energy trying to resolve the dilemma; mostly to rationalize it into insignificance.

For centuries now the debate has raged. The questions have changed, but the dilemma is still there. The question is not: How long are the days of Genesis 1? Of course, in all intellectual honesty, it is obvious they are literal twenty-four hour days. They are just as literal as the sower, seed, and types of soil in Jesus' Parable of the Sower and the Seed. But we know that story with equally literal details is a fictitious story for the purpose of illustrating some unrelated point. We know this by what else the bible says about it.

Does the bible say something about it that would indicate the six-day schedule too is a fictitious story to illustrate some unrelated point? Is this six day schedule the biblical chronology of the actual origins or is it similar to the parable of the sower and the seed, a fictitious story using literal days to illustrate some other point? Any possibility of the bible having more to say seems to have been ignored. The question seems to have boiled down to how to reconcile the literal six days of Genesis with reality as observed in nature.

The effort to resolve the dilemma seems to have broken down to controversy among various positions as to how to interpret the six-days assuming that six day stuff is supposed to be true history. Various positions are staked out; Young Earth Creationism, Fiat Creationism, Scientific Creationism, Day Age Creationism, Progressive Creationism, The Gap Theory Chaotic Mass Theory, Theistic Evolution, Intelligent Design... The list goes on ad nauseam.

None have found a satisfactory solution to the dilemma. A cursory look at some of the articles^{1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14} recently published on Academia.edu reveals the controversy among factions of scholars has not ended. There is no consensus among scholars.

But notably, almost totally absent from the list is the intellectually honest solution proposed in this paper. Is there something else to be found in the ancient scripture that would result in an intellectually honest solution to the dilemma?

The Galileo Episode: 1632 - 1992

This is not the first time humans have been faced with such a dilemma; having to choose between what we are taught the bible says and what is observed in reality.

The example that may be most identifiable to us is the Galileo Episode.

The Galileo Episode took almost four hundred years from 1632 to 1992 to resolve. For over 1500 years the bible had been interpreted to agree with ancient Greek science based on the cosmology of Aristotle (384-322 BC.) The bible had been interpreted to say the planet earth was immovable; the center of the universe, and the sun revolved around the central earth.

In February, 1632 AD, Galileo published his scientific treatise: *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief Systems of the World - Ptolemaic and Copernican*, regarding his discoveries in astronomy using the telescope. These discoveries asserted that the long held belief was wrong¹⁵ and that the planet earth actually moved, both around the sun every year and rotating every 24 hours.

In 1633 A. D., the Church brought Galileo to trial.

June 22, 1633, at the age of seventy years, Galileo was convicted. He spent the rest of his life confined under house arrest, forbidden to teach.

That conviction stood for three hundred fifty nine years, four months—until October 31, 1992 when the Catholic Church formally vindicated Galileo. On that date, a papal commission¹⁶ acknowledged the Vatican's error. Traditional religion had accepted a misinterpretation of scripture; that erroneously put the scripture at odds with reality.

More than One Biblical Account of the Origins

What else does the bible say about the origins? Is there something we have been missing? What is missing is recognition of the fact that there are two different biblical chronologies of the origins from which to choose.

Thirty-Four Biblical Creation Accounts:

In the bible there are many “creation accounts.” They are called creation accounts because they all have one singular point in common; they all attribute the origins to a creator. These accounts are scattered throughout the bible from the collection found early in the book of Genesis of the Old Testament to late in the New Testament. The oldest is found recorded in the book of Job, written long before there ever was a book of Genesis. The newest was written at least fifteen-hundred years later and is recorded in the last book of the bible.

By 2008, at least thirty-four such accounts¹⁷ had been recognized, named, approximately dated, and assembled into a combined internally consistent chronology and presented in the book *Eyewitness to the Origins*, by Max B. Frederick¹⁸. The bulk of the information in this article is from that book where you will find detailed information.

About the Genesis Collection of Accounts:

The book of Genesis is not a straight through chronologically ordered account of the beginnings as is commonly assumed. It is a collection of pre-existing accounts that were gathered into a collection of accounts called Genesis. The first account is found in the first two verses of Genesis and serves as an introduction to the collection of creation accounts following it. That introductory account is a condensation from another pre-existing account

and acknowledges the sky overhead, the dry land of the continents (earth) and the waters of the ocean—the ancient Hebrew expression for the sum total of the universe. The second account runs from Genesis 1:3 to 2:3. (Remember, the chapter divisions are a later artificial system of division of the text.) That second account contains the six-day chronology superimposed upon an original, pre-existing account containing a two pass chronology, the first pass presenting the essentials of the botany side of the food chain, the second pass illustrating the zoology side of the food chain. The third Genesis account is in Gen 2:4-7. It describes the pre-historic condition of the earth at a specific stage of development in the Eon of Early Development before any humans existed. It contains a striking correlation with the later discoveries of modern science concerning development and function of the early atmosphere. The collection of accounts goes on...

An Alternate Chronology recorded in Thirty-Four Biblical Creation Accounts:

An Alternate Biblical Chronology is found in those thirty-four biblical creation accounts. This is not science read into the bible as was done in the Galileo Episode, but a true biblical chronology; an alternative to the one found in the first chapter of Genesis.

When all the biblical creation accounts are merged together with the details in chronological order, there emerges an order of events that is consistent from account to account and common to all these accounts. In this chronology there is no biblical time scale; only a biblical order in which it happened and that it took a long time.

Back to the Dilemma:

Like I said, the current dilemma's question seems to have boiled down to how to reconcile the literal six days of Genesis 1 with the intellectually honest reality as observed in nature.

But what if that is not the real question? What if the question is not bible versus science? What if the answer is in making the choice between two mutually incompatible biblical chronologies? What if there are multiple propositions presented in the bible; two different options as to which *biblical* chronological order to choose?

In the Galileo Episode there were multiple biblical options and the wrong one was first chosen. That dilemma was solved by eventually choosing the correct biblical answer.

What if, for thousands of years we have been blinded to the rest of what the bible says about the origins? What if there is, in fact, a different biblical chronology to choose that is consistent with what is observed in nature?

As it turns out in the bible there are two distinctly different and conflicting orders of events concerning details of the origins. One is found in Genesis chapter 1. The other is found in the thirty-four biblical creation accounts scattered throughout the bible. Although these multiple accounts are scattered, they have a consistent, common, order of creation events.

That consistent, common biblical order of creation events is also consistent with the order of events observed in nature as discovered by modern scientists since the time of Galileo.

Now, the dilemma becomes: Which of these two conflicting biblical chronologies with their conflicting orders of events must we choose. An intellectually honest choice is easy. Not only is the second choice consistent from account to account, it is consistent with reality.

In addition, that second choice, the alternate biblical chronology actually predicts future modern science discovery.

The Wrong Biblical Choice:

In the first chapter of the first book of the bible, there appears what has traditionally been held to be the official biblical schedule of the beginnings. That chapter contains a six-day chronology for all creation and gives a specific order of events.

The first day - light was created.

The second day - the sky was created.

The third day - dry land, seas, plants and trees were created.

The fourth day - the Sun, Moon and stars were created.

One needs to go no further to see the dilemma. This appears to be a chronology of items in the origins. But there is a problem with the order of events. The sun, moon, and stars were not created until after the planet earth existed with fully functional vegetation.

The Right Biblical Choice:

As we read further into the bible, we find an alternate chronology of the origins with an order of events that is different from what we see in six-day chronology.

For example, a few of the more obvious items mentioned in Psalm 104, are given in chronological order as follows. Notice that order is not consistent with the order of events in the six-day chronology in that vegetation is not created until after the sun, moon, and stars.

The Pre Existence of God

v.1, *O LORD my God, You are very great* (NASB)

Light comes into existence

v. 2a, *Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak* (NASB)

Appearance and **Expansion of the universe** (including sun, moon, and stars)

v. 2b, *Stretching out heaven* (NASB)

Planet Earth surfaced with rock, the underlayment for future ocean and continents

v. 5, *laid the foundations of the earth* (KJV)

Filling of the Oceans

v. 6a, *You covered it with the deep* (NASB)

Ocean covered the whole planet earth—no dry land, (no continents)

v. 6b, *The waters were standing above the mountains* (NASB)

Emergence of the continents—the earth (dry land) formed

v. 8, *The mountains rose; the valleys sank down* (NASB)

Onset of the **Hydrologic Cycle**

v. 10, *He sends forth springs in the valleys* (NASB)

Finally comes the **vegetation**, after preparation for it is accomplished.

v. 14, *He causes the grass to grow* (NASB)

The order the items in bold above that are mentioned in the account appears to be the chronological order in which those items came into existence. This establishes Psalm 104 to be a forward chronologically ordered biblical creation account. That order is consistent with the chronological order that is common to the myriad of biblical creation accounts.

In this one account the list goes on, listing more items in chronological order. Many are just as obvious, others are more obscure. But, all in all there are more than fifty items listed in this single heretofore unacknowledged creation account and all are in chronological order. The total list of items mentioned in all the many biblical accounts adds up to about a hundred such items. This is far more items than are mentioned in the six-day chronology.

Not all of those many biblical creation accounts contain chronology clues. But about half of them do. Some have overt statements as to certain things happening before or after others. Other accounts have the clues in the order of presentation within the account. Psalm 104 is in forward time order; others have a reverse chronological order. Some start in the middle of the sequence and from that point go back in time then start over at that middle point and go forward in time. Some have two passes through the sequence of events. All have numerous items mentioned, but rarely is it stated something like, “this is the order in which these items occurred,” the items are simply mentioned in some order and it is obvious the order in which they are mentioned is related to the chronological order in which they actually occurred.

Which is the actual chronology—both cannot be

The six-day order of events found in the first chapter, or the common order of events found in the thirty-four biblical creation accounts; which is to be determined to be figurative and which is to be considered to be literal? That is not the question—both are literal. But both cannot be the actual order of events of the origins.

The dilemma is, the order of events found in the chronology common to all biblical accounts differs from the order of events in the six-day chronology found in one biblical account.

One must be fictional, if not both, but both cannot be the actual true chronology of the origins because two conflicting orders of events cannot both be true. The question then becomes: Is even one of them the true chronology of the events concerning the origins of the heavens, the earth, and the sea?

Evidence One is True, One Actually Predicts Modern Science Discovery

Chief among the items in the biblical creation accounts is one very specific event. It is an event mentioned in more of the accounts than any other detail other than the claim that it was “God” that did it. About half of the accounts which do contain chronological clues mention that one very significant event. Yet, until recently, neither scientists nor theologians were even aware that such an event had ever occurred. It is the event of the sudden emergence of the continents; the event of the earth [the dry land], suddenly emerging from below sea level to be continents, permanently above sea level, a newly formed permanent feature of the surface of the planet earth. Before the continents [dry land earth] formed, the planet earth had previously been completely covered with the waters of the ocean.

Before we go on, we must correct some prevalent misunderstandings. When the bible says “earth” in the creation accounts, it is not talking about the planet earth. The term “earth” is actually defined in the first chapter of the bible where it is talking about the forming of the “earth” [continents] by the dry land emerging from below sea level. Note the definition in bold print. “*And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And **God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas...***” Gen 1:9,10 (KJV)

Before this forming of the continents, the “*earth was without form*” Gen 1:2 (KJV.) Here the “earth” refers to the same “dry land” of the continents before they formed by the “dry land” rising, emerging from below sea level.

It is plain to see, “*Earth*” does not refer to the planet earth from which misinterpretation gave rise to the erroneous “chaotic mass” theory. Yet, that erroneous misinterpretation has been used to modify the translation in at least one version.

And the earth was without form and void (KJV) has morphed into, *the earth was a shapeless, chaotic mass.* (TLB¹⁹)

According to the biblical accounts this “*earth without form*” was the condition of the continents after the “*foundations of the earth*” was laid and before the emergence of the continents. Since, “*Earth*” refers to the dry land of the continents, not to the planet earth; then its foundation has to be the rock layer of our planet that lies below the continents. The biblical accounts say that layer of rock, the foundations of the continents, was first covered with the waters of the ocean before the continents formed. That makes sense of where the Psalm 104 account describes the process of the forming of the “earth”: “*Who laid the foundations of the earth...Thou coveredst it [the foundations] with the deep [the oceans]...the waters [of the oceans] stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they [the waters] fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.*” Ps, 104:5-7 (KJV)

That’s right, the mountains were all under water before the “earth” was formed. The very next verse says, “*The mountains rose; the valleys sank down to the place which You established for them.*” Ps. 104:8 (NASB) Thus, the continents were formed.

It was a sudden event. This suddenness of this event of the forming of the continents [earth (dry land)] was a known fact even before the book of Genesis was written. It is so described in the book of Job which is the oldest book of the bible. Just the asking of the questions in this ancient science quiz recorded in the book of Job indicates ancient knowledge of the emergence of the continents and that it was a sudden event.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?... Or [who] shut up the sea with doors, When it [the earth] brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I... said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and Here shall thy proud waves be stayed? Job 38:4-11 (KJV)

Thus it is seen that before the book of Genesis was assembled, it was known fact that it was a sudden event and a permanent change to the surface of our planet.

That anciently known fact was not among the facts known by modern science until its discovery was published²⁰ May 24, 2018 in the journal, “Nature”. That publication came thousands of years after its pre-publication in the Ancient Scriptures and over ten years after that same fact was recognized in the bible and published in the book “Eyewitness to the Origins” in 2008. This alternate biblical chronology of the origins actually predicted²¹ that recent discovery by modern science. And this is not the only example²².

The Wrong Choice: Does it have a Different Legitimate Purpose?

Once the proper biblical choice has been recognized, it becomes obvious that the purpose of the literal six-day chronology was not to depict the actual schedule of the origins.

Perhaps its purpose was to illustrate, to be a memory aid, of the fourth commandment wherein it says six days shall thou labor and on the seventh rest. That is one of the Ten Commandments that, according to the bible, were given to the same man credited with assembling those pre-existing accounts of the origins into the book of Genesis; about the same phase of his life that he was given the Ten Commandments.

With intellectually honest analysis, it becomes obvious that the six-day chronology was superimposed upon an older, pre-existing account of the origins which also contained, and still does contain, the original order of events consistent with all the other biblical accounts of the origins. Circumstantial evidence indicates it may even have been Moses himself who did the editing as he assembled the book of Genesis from his collection of prior accounts.

Could it be that the literal six-day chronology was superimposed upon this pre-existing two pass chronology creation account simply for an illustration to reinforce the memorization of the fourth of the Ten Commandments? That is the one commandment where people are to work six days then take a seventh day off. It was important enough to make the penalty for violation very severe. Yet, there is no natural phenomenon to illustrate the seven day cycle such as the daily rotation of the earth to illustrate the twenty-four hour circadian cycle, or the 28 day rotation of the moon around the earth to illustrate the monthly lunar cycle, or the circling of the earth around the sun to illustrate the yearly annual cycle. In the absence of such a natural cycle to illustrate this important seven day cycle, could it have been simply added to an existing account for such a purpose?

And who could have done it other than the one to whom the Ten Commandments were given at about the same time of his life that he assembled the many accounts of the past into the Book of Genesis?

Just asking.

Doesn't there have to be some logical reason for the existence of this fictitious six-day chronology?

According to Merriam-Webster^{a 23}, a parable is a usually short fictitious story that illustrates...providing an instructive example or lesson.

This type of figure of speech or allegory is allowable in the bible; this type of figure of speech was used extensively by Jesus where a literal, yet fictitious event was used to provide an instructive example to illustrate an unrelated truth. In this case, the twenty-four hour days are just as literal as the literal sower and seed in Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed. But no one is looking for the historical sower because we all know it was a fictitious story made up to illustrate an unrelated truth. In this case the six days of creation and a seventh day of rest are a story of fictional days, just as fictional as the sower and the seed in the parable, made up to illustrate the six days of labor and seventh day of rest in the fourth of the Ten Commandments. No one should be looking for the fictitious six days of creation any more than we should be looking for the grave of the fictitious sower.

The main issue here is, we know the biblical six-literal-twenty-four-hour-day chronology is a fiction because we are given a much more robust biblical yet conflicting chronology. The more robust one is in accord with reality. In making the choice between which is true and which is the fiction, the more robust is to be the proper choice. In addition, the bible also provides the principle to which this figure of speech illustrates—the seven day labor/rest cycle.

^a Merriam-Webster, Definition of parable: a usually short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle// the Biblical parable of the Good Samaritan, also: something (such as a news story or a series of real events) likened to a parable in providing an instructive example or lesson.
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Conclusions

The answer to the dilemma is in the alternate chronology found in the myriad of biblical creation accounts, not the six-day chronology found in only one single account.

There are at least thirty-four biblical creation accounts that, when all combined have an alternate chronology that is common to all accounts and consistent from account to account.

That alternate chronology is contrary to the six-day chronology, but consistent with reality.

Even the one account with the six-day chronology also contains the alternate chronology. A careful intellectually honest analysis of that one account recognizes the six-day chronology was superimposed on a pre-existing account that already had the alternate chronology and in fact, still has it. It becomes obvious that the six-day chronology was superimposed on that account for some reason other than to be the factual biblical record of the origins.

Not only is the alternate chronology consistent with reality, it is consistent to the point that several details have been recognized in it over ten years before the discovery and publication of those same details by modern science. That's right, when the correct biblical chronology is recognized it actually predicts future discoveries by modern science.

The alternate biblical chronology, not the six-day chronology is the factual biblical record of the beginnings.

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