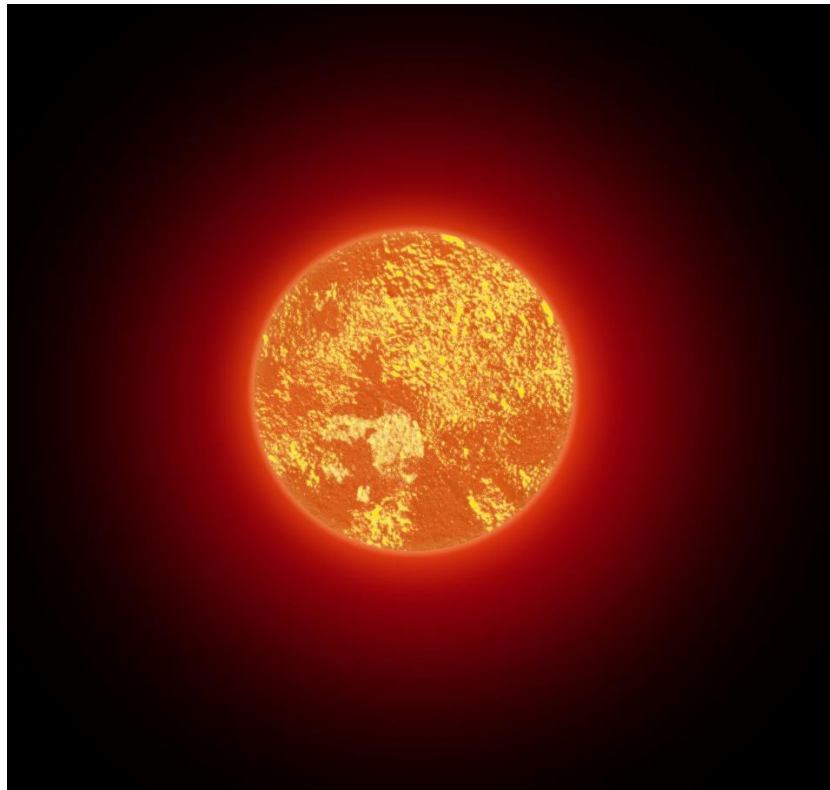


# The Framework Hypothesis' Denial of Six Historical, Chronological Days

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Moses is a sure witness and herald of the one God and his work in creation. The first words Moses was inspired to pen are amazing: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” With the revelation of this truth, the first article of the Apostle’s Creed begins. This is where the Bible begins—with the doctrine of creation.

If we are going to understand the Christian gospel, we need to begin here. If we want to know how rightly to live, we need to understand the nature and goodness of the original creation.

There was a time when God alone was.

And then the gloriously happy Trinity called into existence a world with two humans who could live in fellowship with their Father.

### **In the Space of Six Days**

We confess that our Heavenly Father is our Creator. The *Heidelberg Catechism* teaches that the Father is the author of creation: “The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” is the Creator and author of this world and everything in it. The *Belgic Confession of Faith* agrees: “The Father is the cause, origin, and beginning of all things visible and invisible.”

Creation is the work of the Triune God.

Our Father created by the power of His Word and through His Spirit. The *Belgic Confession of Faith* emphasizes the creation as a Trinitarian work: “We believe that the Father, by the Word, that is, by His Son, hath created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures” (Article 12). The *Belgic Confession of Faith* calls the Son the “word, wisdom, and image of the Father” while the Spirit is the “eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son.”

The Nicene Creed identifies the Holy Spirit as “the Lord and Giver of life.” The Psalmist sings about the role of the Holy Spirit in creating the stars: “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Psalm 33:6). John Calvin said that Moses ascribes the work of creation to the Trinity so “that we may not conjure up some other god than him who would have himself recognized in that clear image.”

The *Heidelberg Catechism* also teaches *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing): “who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them” (Lord’s Day 9). “Out of nothing” means that the original act of creation was God making all things out of nothing. The *Belgic Confession of Faith* makes the same point: “hath created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures as it seemed good unto Him” (Article 12). The Bible teaches fiat creation in Psalm 33:9: “For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” The word “fiat” comes from the Latin translation of the Hebrew words that mean “Let it be.” The creative word works in the primal mass to bring forth the things that God created.

### **An Historical Account**

Genesis 1 is a historical account. It is not poetry. We know what Hebrew poetry is like—and we find many examples in the Old Testament. It is history.

The Hebrew uses a construction at the beginning of a sentence that communicates that what comes next is a further historical account in a historical passage. This construction is called a “*waw* consecutive”; It is the use of the word “and” at the beginning of a sentence. When we use “and” at the beginning of sentences in English, this is thought to be awkward. But the use of “and” at the beginning of sentences in the King James Version of the Bible is a literal translation of the Hebrew Bible. It was quite common for the Old Testament writers to use the “*waw* consecutive” at the beginning of sentences in historical accounts. Often the Hebrew word for “and” is placed prior to an imperfect verb at the beginning of a sentence. This implies that the actions are occurring consecutively in time, hence the term “*waw* consecutive”.

We find the repeated use of the “*waw* consecutive” in Genesis 1. Verse 6, which recounts the beginning of Day 2, is connected to an imperfect verb for the Hebrew verb “to say.” This is literally translated as “And said God.” We find the

“waw consecutive” repeated in verses 9, 14, 20, and 24. Here as elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, this shows that Moses meant for the incidents in Genesis 1 to be understood as historical events that occur consecutively. Genesis recounts genuine history. Genesis 1 is not poetry. It is not some type of mythical saga. It recounts the actual history of the first week in human history.

The days of Genesis 1 are literal, historical, chronological, sequential days that involve a rotation of planet earth on her axis. John Calvin understood that these days were historical; he wrote that “God himself took the space of six days” to create the cosmos (*Commentary* on Genesis 1:5). Calvin held to the view that the creation occurred in six historical days. Sometimes supporters of theistic evolution or the framework hypothesis of Genesis 1 claim that six-day creationism is a novel theory. Theistic evolutionists connected to Biologos claim that belief in six-day creationism was an American Fundamentalist response to Darwinism. This claim reveals ignorance of the church fathers, medieval commentators, the Protestant reformers, the post-Reformation theologians, and Reformed commentators of the last centuries.

Was John Calvin a naïve child of his times? There are compelling reasons for interpreting the days of Genesis in a straightforward manner—in their plain sense.

### **The Westminster Confession of Faith: In the Space of Six Days**

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* also teaches that God made the world in the space of six days—and the theologians and ministers at the Westminster Assembly all believed in six-day creation. In Chapter 4 which is entitled “Of Creation”, the *Westminster Confession of Faith* states:

It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in *the space of six days*; and all very good.

Today there are Presbyterians who play all kinds of semantic games to explain away the language “in the space of six days.” These Presbyterians hold to an old earth and hold to some version of the framework hypothesis and so reject six-day creation. But even a little child grasps the meaning of this language.

Martin Luther responded to those who thought it was too difficult or impossible for God to create all things in six days, said:

When Moses writes that God created heaven and earth and whatever is in them in six days, then let this period continue to have been six days, and do not venture to devise any comment according to which six days were one day. But if you cannot understand how this could have been done in six days, then grant the Holy Spirit the honor of being more learned than you are. For you are to deal with Scripture in such a way that you bear in mind that God Himself says what is written. But since God is speaking, it is not fitting for you wantonly to turn His Word in the direction you wish to go.

## **Compelling Reasons**

There are compelling reasons to take the days as literal, ordinary days of a 24-hour duration. First, the primary meaning of the Hebrew word for day, “*yom*”, is a normal 24-hour period of time defined as the time of light and darkness. Thousands and thousands of times the word “*yom*” is used in its basic sense of an ordinary, historical day—which involved a complete rotation of the earth on her axis. The overwhelming majority of times where the word is used, 2,304 times, “*yom*” refers to a normal, full day-and-night cycle or to the light portion of that cycle.

A central rule of exegesis is that you use the primary meaning of a word unless the context requires otherwise.

Moses could have used another word that refers to age, the Hebrew word “*olam*”, if he had wanted to communicate a long period of time.

Second, Moses’ uses the same word to describe days 4 to 6 when the solar system is created as he does to describe the first three days before the sun was made.

Nothing in the text suggests a change of function of “day” for the first three days. The six days all have the same qualifiers. The only difference is that God had created an alternate source of light during the first three days.

Third, Moses explicitly qualifies each of the six creation days by “evening and morning.” Moses uses numerical adjectives. Outside Genesis there are 32 times in the O.T. where “evening and morning” present the two parts of a normal day.

Fourth, the numbering of each day is an argument for normal days. Moses adds the numerical adjective to “day” 119 times in his writings. Each time the reference is to a literal, ordinary day. For example, when we are told that circumcision was on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, this means a literal, historical day.

There are compelling reasons to take the days as being in chronological succession.

First, the fact that Moses uses the ordinary word “day”, that it is defined in terms of evening and morning, and that each day is numbered is a compelling reason to understand these days as linear events that occur in successive days. When the word “day” appears in a numbered series it always means a natural day. The consecutively numbered days show that Moses is following calendrical days. There is an ordered sequence. These are sequential days.

Second, that the days of creation are sequential days is evident from the fourth commandment. The fourth commandment, as recorded in Exodus 20:11 also states that God created the world in the space of six days: “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Every time the plural “days” is used it refers to normal days. In the fourth commandment God speaks of these six days in the plural: “six days”. Ages of time are never expressed by the plural “days.”

Man's workweek is patterned after God's. God's workweek is something to be imitated. The analogy is useless if God did not make the world in six days. God does not pattern His workweek after man's. To make Genesis 1 a mere literary framework inverts reality. Man's week becomes the pattern for God's! The human week derives its validity and significance from the creative week of God. So, there is compelling reason to believe that God created the world in the space of six days—chronologically successive periods of 24-hours each.

### **Framework Hypothesis Objections to Literal, Chronological, Successive Days**

Theistic evolutionists and Framework Hypothesis Theorists object to understanding the days of Genesis as literal, chronological, successive days. Let us look at their arguments.

First, they claim that Genesis 2:4 describes the entire creation week as a “day.” They claim that this proves that the days of Genesis 1 should not be understood as historical days. In fact, in this very context the word “day” is used in a figurative sense. The word “day” in Genesis 2:4 is attached to the preposition “in” and so its form is different from the word “yom” that is by itself in Genesis 1. In Genesis 1 the Hebrew word is “*beyom*” a combination of “in” and “day.” The word “day” is here used in the figurative sense to describe the six days of creation. The figurative use of the word “day” in this context certainly does not contradict the plain sense of the word “day” in Genesis 1. Moses carefully defined and qualified the nature of the days recorded in Genesis 1.

Second, theistic evolutions and Framework Hypothesis theorists claim that God only used ordinary, providence as the prevailing method of creation during the creation week. They claim that this means that God, therefore, would not have used a supernatural source of light that was created on the first day. Instead, God would only have used the ordinary, providential light that comes from the sun. This proves,

they allege, that the days of Genesis 1 cannot be historical and chronological—because the creation of light from an alternative source on the first day never happened. The only light that ever shone on planet earth came from the sun.

On what text do supporters of the Framework Hypothesis hang this argument? Genesis 2:5. The text that supposedly teaches that God only used ordinary means, like He uses today, and that He therefore, also solely used during the creation week is supposedly found in Genesis 2:5: “And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.” Genesis 2:5 is translated “no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted.” The claim is made that no plants were growing because God had not caused it to rain. The argument is that God used ordinary providential means for growing of plants—the sending of rain—just as He does today. Then the logical explanation for why bushes had not grown is that God had not sent rain yet. Therefore, we are told in Genesis 2:6-7 how God dealt with this absence of rain was by sending a mist from the earth.

The big point that Genesis 2:5 proves is that all explanations for what happen in creation are done according to ordinary providential means—just as we have in the world today. So Moses offers a perfectly natural and ordinary explanation for the absence of vegetation.

The very fact that Moses gives this explanation shows the presence of *an argued presupposition: The mode of providence at work during the creation was the same as that today*. So, there could be no supernatural source of light since God employed only ordinary means to sustain His creatures in the creation period.

But this novel, minority interpretation of Genesis 2:5 misses Moses’ point. In Genesis 2, Moses is setting up Adam’s moral test and anticipating his failure. Genesis 2:5 is stating that before God cursed the ground with thorny shrubs and



before man had to laboriously cultivate the ground, God provided him with all that he needed. Genesis 2:5 anticipates moral failure, rather than announce God's creational method.

The third great argument of the Framework Hypothesis Theorists and Theistic Evolutionists is their claim that the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the creation week is ongoing and, therefore, cannot be a literal day. But if the 7<sup>th</sup> day is not an historical day, but an ongoing day, then the six first days of creation must also be non-historical days. They argue that this shows the first six days could be long periods of time. They claim that the 7<sup>th</sup> day is unique in that it lacks the concluding evening-morning formula. The text does not say: "The even and the morning were the 8<sup>th</sup> day. This suggests that the 7<sup>th</sup> day is eternal. The 7<sup>th</sup> day continues today—and will continue into eternity. The 7<sup>th</sup> day, therefore, refers to heavenly time, not earthly time. The reference is to divine days, not 24-hour days on planet earth. This all implies that it is still today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

This is all very odd. It is odd to claim that we are today in the 7<sup>th</sup> day of creation. What a strange idea to claim that the 7<sup>th</sup> day is an unending day. How strange to talk about God's time or heavenly time! If we are still on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of rest, it would imply that we still live on a day when no Fall has occurred, and no curse is in effect. Then God would still be blessing that ongoing day. This would contradict Exodus 20:11.

Why is it that Moses did not conclude the account of the creation week with the words "and the even and the morning were the 8<sup>th</sup> day"? The answer to this is simple: the 7<sup>th</sup> day is not expressly delimited because the creation week has come to an end. To mention another "morning" by saying the "evening and the morning were the next day" would imply another day that followed the unique creation week. Then it would appear that our week was eight days long. But God intended for the creation week to be seven days long and function as the pattern for a seven-day week

throughout human history. So God does not have Moses refer to an 8<sup>th</sup> day in the creation account. This certainly does not mean that the 7<sup>th</sup> day continues forever. It simply means that the creation week has come to an end. Our weeks will be of seven days.

Fourth, Framework Hypothesis Theorists claim that the reference to the sun being created on the 4<sup>th</sup> day--whereas light being created on Day 1 shows that the days are not chronologically ordered.

John Calvin explains the importance of the origin of light before the creation of the sun.: “Therefore the Lord, by the very order of the creation, bears witness that he holds in his hand the light, which he is able to impart to us without the sun and moon.” Scripture teaches that light can exist apart from the sun, as it will in the New Heavens and the New Earth, as mentioned in Revelation 22:5.

Because the final providential mechanism for separate light from darkness (the sun) was not created until Day 4, we find the text reflecting this. God does call the creation of light good (Genesis 1:4). But the dividing of the light from the darkness is not called good. This is similar to what we find on the second day when God divided the waters from the waters. He does not call this good. It is not until God separates the water from the land on day 3 that this is declared good. Adam’s creation is not “good” (Genesis 2:18) until Eve is separated out of him. Therefore, the text signals that more is to come—and after God makes the sun we are told “and God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:18).

Fifth, Theistic Evolutionists and Framework Hypothesis Theorists claim that there is parallelism between triads in Genesis 1 that indicate a topical rather than chronological arrangement. What is this parallelism that they find between the triad of days? They act as if these parallels are rock solid parallels.

Day 1 the creation of Light-----Day 4 the creation of the Sun  
Day 2 the creation of the Firmament-----Day 5 the creation of the Birds

Day 3 the creation of the dry land-----Day 6 the creation of land animals and man

They claim that days 1 to 3 refer to the creation kingdoms. Days 4-6 refer to the creature kings that inhabit these kingdoms.

This implies that the framework of the creation days has been arranged by Moses for theological and literary reasons rather than sequential reasons. While the reference to “days” refers to ordinary days—the grand picture of the creation week is figurative. The creation week is pictured as an ordinary week in which the divine craftsman goes about His creative toil. One problem with this is that man’s week becomes a pattern for Moses to describe God’s workweek.

But there are problems with this supposedly iron-clad parallelism. Water is actually created on Day 1. The seas were created on the third day—so there is a parallel between the third day with the creation of water and the fifth day that involves the creation of fish. Not only Day 2 has to do with water. So, the parallel is disrupted. The seas that are created on Day 3 do not find a parallel on Day 6. It is only the dry land made on Day 3 that parallels the creation of land animals on Day 6.

So, the parallels in the triad are artificial if they are understood as set in stone and as signally the only possible parallel.

Yet the framework hypothesis claims that the parallels are so written in stone that they prove that the text of Genesis 1 is written as a literary text rather than an historical text.

Of course, there is an historical reason for the chronological order that we find in Genesis 1. God must first create water on the first day and then separate the seas from the dry land on the third day to prepare for the creation of marine animals on the fifth day. Day three must predate Day 5, for the Lord needed to create dry land

with fruit trees and plants as a habitat for the flying animals that he would create on Day 5. The creation of man on Day 6 shows that man is the climax of the creation.

John Calvin repudiated the notion that ordinary providence was the process by which God did His creative work. Calvin explains the importance of the origin of light before the creation of the sun: “Therefore the Lord, by the very order of the creation, bears witness that he holds in his hand the light, which he is able to impart to us without the sun and moon.”

### **God’s Reason for Creating in Six Days**

God chose to create in six days gradually for our sake. God created the world in the space of six days, and He revealed this to us—so that we might know the origin of the world. God wanted even the little children to know how the world and everything in it came to be. He wanted us to be filled with wonder as we observe, by faith, the works of God on each day.

God wanted us to know not only that He is the Creator—but how He created. Supporters of the frame-work hypothesis hold to the fantasy that we know that God is the Creator, but we do not know how He created the world and everything in it. God gave us the Genesis account to reveal how He created His creatures and the order in which He did it.

First, He created the mass of the earth and light. He also made the angels. The Belgic Confession of Faith, following Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* has extended confession about how God created the angels good:

He also created the angels good, to be His messengers and to serve His elect; some of whom are fallen from that excellency, in which God created them, into everlasting perdition; and the others have, by the grace of God, remained steadfast and continued in their primitive state. The devils and evil spirits are so depraved that they are enemies of God and every good thing, to the utmost of their power, as murderers, watching to ruin the church and every member thereof, and by their wicked stratagems to destroy all; and are therefore, by

their own wickedness, adjudged to eternal damnation, daily expecting their horrible torments (Article 12).

Second, God created the atmosphere—the firmament and separated waters above from the waters below. Apparently, there was water in orbit above the earth.

Third, God made dry land—and then plants and fruit trees.

Fourth, God made the heavenly bodies. God wants to call our attention to each of His works. The stars lead us to exclaim how glorious God is.

Fifth, God made the fish and birds from the waters. God wants us to praise Him for His infinite wisdom and creativity. He did not make just a few kinds of birds, but ostriches and peacocks and hummingbirds. He made dolphins and sharks and perch.

Sixth, God made the animals and insects and finally man. Man, the crown of the creation, with his conscious soul can glorify God. God wants to provide the framework for our week. God wants us to see that man is the crown of the creation. There is a good reason why man created man last of all. Man is unique—made in the image of God. God’s purpose was that man should be the king of the creation—reigning as a steward of God.

The order of creation is instructive about the character of God. God is a God of order. He acts and creates in a logical order. God brings order out of the muddy mass of the earth. God wants to call attention to His various works. He distinguishes between the various kind of creatures. He makes clear that He did not oversee macro-evolution (evolution between the species) but created each creature after its kind.

God shows Himself to be a God who works. God calls our attention to His work. He is always at work in providence. God calls us to work and rest. We are to imitate God for six days. Then we are to imitate God by resting on the Lord’s Day. God calls our attention to His creativeness.

## **Spiritual Lessons from Creation**

Take pious delight in the works of God open and manifest in this beautiful theater. This world is a theater that displays the glory of God. Study all God's creatures to learn about God's wisdom, justice, goodness, and power. The purpose of the doctrine of creation is experiential—to lead men to trust in and worship God.

God emphasizes the Creator/creature distinction in the doctrine of creation. Genesis teaches that God is the eternally existing Creator while creatures were made by Him and are dependent upon Him. God asserts His eternity in Genesis 1:1. Time is first marked here. The creature is not God—and therefore the New Age movement is refuted. Genesis teaches that Jehovah is the one true God, the Maker and Founder of the universe.

We need to believe that the God who created the world is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our Father for Christ's sake. Here is where the cross comes in. Because Jesus died on the cross for us---we can be the adopted children of God. The Creator is also our Redeemer. He will redeem the whole cosmos and make all things new. His first work of creation now pictures the second great work of recreation.

Learn to serve your Creator. The Belgic Confession emphasizes that God formed the various animals and creatures to serve their Creator--“giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator” (Article 12).

God rested from His work to delight in His good creation.

We are to rest in God. Enjoy His works today. Delight in His finished work in Jesus Christ. Enjoy the creation. The creation in itself is good—although it now groans under the curse. Marriage and sexuality are good gifts of God.

Be filled with wonder at God's power and wisdom displayed in His creatures—and realize how safe you are in the providential arms of God. The

Heidelberg Catechism moves immediately from creation to the comfort of providence. It states that our Father Creator

is, for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father; on whom I rely so entirely, that I have no doubt but He will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body; and further, that He will make whatever evils He sends upon me, in this valley of tears, turn out to my advantage; for He is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing, being a faithful Father (Lord's Day 9).

Move from amazement at creation to the comfort of divine providence. Meditate on the wonders of God's hand. Meditate on His creative power in making the animals and birds and flowers and then reflect on how carefully God cares for you. The creation should move you to trust, invoke, praise, and love God.