

## **Evolution, The Bible, and Dinosaurs**

By Bob Harrington

Ever since Charles Darwin published *The Origin of the Species* in 1859 there has been a conflict between many scientists and Christians over the theory of evolution and a literal reading of Genesis 1. But many who wade through the facts of science and the legitimate interpretations of Genesis 1, believe the two actually compliment each other. The astronomer Hugh Ross has done the best job (in my opinion) of showing how the two work together in his book, *The Genesis Question* (Colorado Springs, Col.: NavPress, 1998). I highly recommend this book. Ross believes in the “day age” theory of creation.

There are two key interpretive points that must be accepted for this view to be correct. First, the six days must be understood as six “ages” or “epochs” (this has been understood as a legitimate interpretation in the church from ancient times). If we take the Hebrew word for day (“Yom”) as meaning “age” in this context, then there is a strong correlation between the “day-ages” of Genesis and the fossil record (see the attached “Genesis 1 Creation Days” chart by Hugh Ross and Cameron Slayden). The only remaining difficulty is the fourth day. But this is resolved if we take to heart the perspective of the first two verses of the Bible. After creating the universe and the earth (verse one), God’s Spirit hovered over the waters (verse two). So secondly, we must understand the rest of the creation account as “describing things from the point of view of the Spirit of God” (hovering over the waters on the earth). From this perspective, even though the sun was created earlier (in verse one, it is not visible “over the waters” until the fourth day, as Genesis explains). Once these two points are accepted, there are no conflicts between the scientific evidence and the Bible.

This view enables us to believe that the earth is very old, as the facts of science dictate. God created many life forms over the millions of years of earth history. Some fulfilled their divine purpose and then died off. In this way, the dinosaurs were created, lived on planet earth, and then became extinct (see [www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org) for more info on dinosaurs and related issues). In recent time, God created Human beings (as the Bible clearly teaches). After that, God’s creation activities ceased.

There are other ways to resolve the apparent conflicts between the facts of science and the Bible. Francis Schaffer showed the parameters for such a healthy resolution of the creation-science debate in his book, *No Final Conflict* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity, 1975). The Presbyterian Church of America has even published a summary statement on the four major views of Genesis. The scholars of this conservative Protestant denomination believe each of these four perspectives is a legitimate interpretation, holding to the integrity of the Biblical text. Here are the Presbyterian recommendations for your consideration.

*1. The Day-Age Interpretation* - The six days of the Day-Age view are understood in the same sense as "in that day" of Isaiah 11:10-11—in other words, as periods of indefinite length and not of 24 hours duration. The six days are taken as sequential but as overlapping and perhaps merging into one another. According to this view, the Genesis 1 creation week describes events from the point of view of the earth, which is being

prepared as the habitation for man. In this context, the explanation of day four is that the sun only became visible on that day, as atmospheric conditions allowed the previous alternation of light and darkness to be perceived as coming from the previously created sun and other heavenly bodies. The Day-Age construct preserves the general sequence of events as portrayed in the text and is not merely a response to Charles Darwin and evolutionary science. From ancient times there was recognition among Bible scholars that the word "day" could mean an extended period of time.

*2. The Framework Interpretation* - The distinctive feature of the Framework view is its understanding of the week (not the days as such) as a metaphor. According to this interpretation, Moses used the metaphor of the week to narrate God's acts of creation. Thus, God's supernatural creative words or fiats are real and historical but the exact timing is left unspecified. The purpose of the metaphor is to call Adam to imitate God in work, with the promise of entering His Sabbath rest. Creation events are grouped in two triads of days: Days 1-3 (creations kingdoms) are paralleled by Days 4-6 (creation's kings). Adam is king of the earth; God is the King of Creation.

*3. The Analogical Days Interpretation* - According to the Analogical view, the "days" of Genesis 1 are God's workdays, analogous (but not necessarily identical) to human workdays. They set a pattern for our rhythm of work and rest. The six days represent periods of God's historical supernatural activity in preparing and populating the earth as a place for humans to live, love, work, and worship. These days are broadly consecutive. That is, they are successive periods of unspecified length. They may overlap in part, or they may reflect logical rather than chronological criteria for grouping certain events on certain days.

*4. The Calendar-Day Interpretation* - Often called the literal view, the traditional view, or the twenty-four-hour view, the Calendar-Day perspective may be described very simply. It accepts the first chapter of Genesis as historical and chronological in character and takes the creation week as consisting of six twenty-four-hour days, followed by a twenty-four-hour Sabbath. Since Adam and Eve were created as mature adults, so the rest of creation came forth from its Maker. The Garden included full-grown trees and animals, which Adam named. Those holding this view believe this is the normal understanding of the creation account and that this has been the most commonly held understanding of this account both in Jewish and Christian history.

For a related resource and in-depth coverage of the various views, including their strengths and weaknesses, go to:

[http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/pca\\_creation\\_study\\_committee\\_report.shtml?main](http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/pca_creation_study_committee_report.shtml?main)