

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Genesis, Session 6, Genesis 1 “Days” [Yom] – Theories of Interpretation Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Genesis, Session 6, Genesis 1 “Days” [Yom] – Theories of Interpretation, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture transcript discusses various interpretations of the "days" in Genesis 1, exploring whether they represent literal 24-hour periods or longer, indeterminate spans of time. The lecture presents several viewpoints, including the 24-hour solar day interpretation, the day-age theory (where each day is a long age), and interpretations that view the days as literary or symbolic frameworks without chronological significance. The lecturer analyzes arguments for and against each perspective, considering textual evidence from Genesis and Exodus, along with the implications of scientific findings. Ultimately, the lecturer emphasizes the importance of careful biblical interpretation and cautions against forcing scientific theories onto the text or ignoring established scientific facts.

2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Genesis, Session 6 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Pentateuch → Genesis).



**Vannoy_Genesis_Se
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3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Genesis, Session 6, Genesis 1 “Days” [Yom] – Theories of Interpretation

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture transcript on Genesis 1, focusing on the interpretation of "yom" (day):

Briefing Document: Interpretation of "Yom" in Genesis 1

Overview: This lecture explores various interpretations of the Hebrew word "yom," translated as "day," in the context of Genesis 1, focusing on whether it should be understood as a literal 24-hour solar day or as a period of time of indeterminate length. It also delves into non-literal interpretations that see "day" as a literary or symbolic device.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Meaning of "Yom" (Day):

- **Usage in the Old Testament:** The lecture acknowledges the varied usage of "yom" in the Old Testament, implying that its meaning can be flexible. It opens the door for interpretations beyond a strict 24-hour day.
- **Usage in Genesis 1:** Vannoy argues that there are indicators within Genesis 1 itself that point toward understanding "yom" as a period of time of creative activity rather than a solar day.
- **Arguments for "Yom" as a period of time (day-age view):**
- **Measurement of Time:** The sun, moon, and stars, which are used for measuring time, are not created until the fourth day, making the first three days unlikely to be solar days.
- **"Evening and Morning":** These phrases can be interpreted as beginnings and endings of periods of creative activity, rather than the start and end of a solar day.
- **Sixth Day Events:** The many activities of the sixth day (creation of animals, man, naming animals, the creation of woman) seem to require a longer period than a 24-hour day.
- **Seventh Day:** God's rest on the seventh day is presented as an ongoing rest from creative activity, not a literal 24-hour period, suggesting the preceding days might also be long periods.

- **Indeterminate Length:** Vannoy concludes that the length of these creative "days" is indeterminate, and the text doesn't explicitly state their duration.
- **Quote:** *"The conclusion that I would draw from the text of Genesis 1 itself is that there are factors in Genesis 1 that suggest that the word "day" or yom is to be understood as a period of time of God's creative activity, which is of indeterminate length."*

1. Views on the Length of "Days":

- **"Actual Days" 24-Hour Solar Day View:** This view is explored in its different variations:
- **Seven Successive 24-Hour Days:** The most literal interpretation of Genesis 1.
- **Restitution (Gap) Theory:** Proposes that the earth became "void" (1:2) after an initial creation. The six days are a reconstitution of the earth.
- **Inter-period Theory:** Proposes that long periods of time occurred between 24-hour days.
- **Arguments in favor:** The primary meaning of "yom" is a solar day, the phrase "evening and morning" strengthens this conclusion, and the analogy with Exodus 20:9-11.
- **Quote:** *"First, in its primary meaning, the word yom or day means a solar day."*
- **Period of Time of Indeterminate Length (Day-Age):** Presents the view that each "day" represents a longer era of God's creative activity. Vannoy favors this view but acknowledges the lack of absolute certainty.
- **"Non-Actual Days":** Views that do not consider the "days" as having a real historical connection to the sequence or process of God's creation.
- **Symbolic/Logical Order:** Origen saw the days as symbolic of the order of creation, not its timing.
- **Quote:** *"No one of a good mind can accept that there was actually a first, second, and third day as well as an evening and morning without sun, moon, and stars."*
- **Allegorical View (Augustine):** Interprets "day" as the spiritual experience of the creature returning to God in response to various aspects of creation.
- **Revelational Day:** The days of Genesis 1 as days of revelation, where God revealed creation to Moses over six days.

- **Framework Hypothesis (Double Symmetry):** The most popular non-actual day view amongst modern evangelicals, according to the lecturer. It's a literary device to structure the creation narrative with no chronological significance. This view emphasizes parallelism between Days 1-3 and Days 4-6, and the presence of the phrase "and God said" with 2 such phrases on days 3 and 6.
- **Quote:** *"The specific order belongs to the writer's method of work, not God's creative acts."*

1. Relationship between Science and Bible:

- **Avoiding Extremes:** The lecture advocates for avoiding both hostility towards science and forcing biblical interpretations to align with scientific theories.
- **Reexamining Scripture:** Scientific discoveries can provide the impetus to reexamine biblical texts and see if the text allows some flexibility in interpretation.
- **Distinguishing:** The lecture encourages the distinction between established scientific facts and scientific theories that are philosophically biased.
- **Francis Schaeffer:** The lecture references Schaeffer's view that the exact length of a "day" in Genesis should be left open.
- **Quote:** *"From the study of the word in Hebrew it is not clear which way it is to be taken. It could be either way. In the light of the word, as used in the Bible, and the lack of finality of science concerning the problem of dating, in a sense there's no debate, because there are no clearly defined terms upon which to debate."*

1. Importance of the Discussion:

- **Secondary to Key Teachings:** Vannoy emphasizes that the length of the "days" is not the most important issue in Genesis 1. The primary teachings about God, humanity, and the universe should not be overshadowed by the debate.

1. Allowance of Differing Opinions:

- **No Dogmatic Conclusion:** The lecture states that there is no definitive proof for any one interpretation. The text allows for a diversity of understanding.
- **Quote:** *"I don't think either side can say: It must be, here's what is the constraint of the text, you have to come to this conclusion."*

Key Takeaways:

- The interpretation of "yom" in Genesis 1 is complex and open to debate.
- There are arguments for both literal (24-hour days) and non-literal (periods of time/literary device) interpretations.
- The lecturer favors the view of "yom" as a period of indeterminate length, but sees the lack of definitive evidence.
- It is important to approach the relationship between science and the Bible with discernment.
- The debate about the length of the "days" shouldn't overshadow the more significant theological themes of Genesis 1.
- There should be freedom to hold differing conclusions on this topic.

Points of Contention and Debate (based on the lecture)

- The validity of the "evening and morning" phrase as conclusive evidence for a 24-hour day.
- The parallelism between days 1-3 and days 4-6 in the framework hypothesis.
- Whether the "day-age" view is primarily motivated by a desire to harmonize with science.
- The legitimacy of non-actual day views in light of the historical interpretation of scripture.

This briefing document should provide a good overview of the lecture and its main points. Let me know if you need anything clarified.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Genesis, Session 6, Genesis 1 “Days” [Yom] – Theories of Interpretation

Genesis 1 “Days”: A Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Vannoy, what are two reasons to interpret *yom* in Genesis 1 as a period of time rather than a solar day?
2. What significant events occur on the sixth day of creation, as described in Genesis, and why might this suggest a longer period than 24 hours?
3. How does the length of the seventh day, according to Vannoy's interpretation, support the view that the other six days are also long periods?
4. What is the main point of disagreement between those who hold a 24-hour solar day view and those who hold a period of time (day-age) view regarding the word *yom*?
5. Briefly explain the restitution or gap theory concerning Genesis 1, and how does it relate to the 24-hour solar day view?
6. What is the inter-period theory, and how does it differ from the restitution theory?
7. What is the primary argument in favor of a 24-hour solar day based on Exodus 20:9-11, and what is Vannoy's response to this analogy?
8. What are two guidelines that Vannoy suggests concerning the relationship of science and the Bible when it comes to understanding Genesis 1?
9. What is the core idea of the “symbolic or logical order” view of the days of Genesis 1 held by Origen?
10. What is the framework hypothesis, and how does it interpret the days of Genesis 1?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Vannoy suggests that *yom* is used elsewhere in the Old Testament to mean a period of time, permitting a similar understanding in Genesis 1. He also notes that the sun and moon, which become the timekeepers for solar days, are not created

until the fourth day, raising the question of how the previous days would be measured.

2. The sixth day includes the creation of land animals, the creation of man, placing Adam in the garden, the naming of animals, Adam realizing he's alone, God creating woman, and Adam's exclamation upon seeing her. All of this seems unlikely to occur within the space of a single 24-hour solar day.
3. The seventh day, on which God rested from his creative activity, has lasted for a long period and continues to the present; this parallels the other six days as similarly extended periods of time, since God has not resumed creative activity since that time.
4. The primary disagreement centers on whether *yom* should be interpreted as a literal 24-hour solar day or as a period of time of indeterminate length, with the latter view positing that God's creative activity did not necessarily occur within 24-hour increments.
5. The restitution or gap theory suggests that there was an initial creation in Genesis 1:1, followed by a cataclysm that rendered the earth "without form and void" (Genesis 1:2). The six days that follow are then a reconstitution of creation, rather than the original creation, with geological time pushed into the gap before 1:2.
6. The inter-period theory suggests that there were long periods of time between each of the six days of creation described in Genesis 1, allowing for geological records to be placed within the framework of the chapter. Unlike the restitution theory, geologic time is not pushed into a gap before the six days.
7. The argument from Exodus 20:9-11 is that God's work and rest pattern in creation (six days of work and one day of rest) should be understood in the same literal sense as the human work/rest pattern given in the law; Vannoy's response is that the analogy is in the 6+1 *sequence*, not necessarily in a solar day framework.
8. Vannoy suggests that Bible believers should avoid hostility to well-established scientific facts and use science with discernment by distinguishing between facts and philosophically biased theories, and they should not twist the meaning of scripture in an attempt to force agreement with scientific theories.
9. Origen viewed the days of Genesis 1 not as historical periods but as symbolic of the logical order of God's creative activity; creation happened in a single moment, and the six days serve to demonstrate the order of creation, not its timeframe.

10. The framework hypothesis views the days of Genesis 1 as a literary device or structure, not as actual days of creative activity. It posits that the days are not intended to be chronological but serve as a framework for presenting the narrative of creation in an ordered and meaningful way.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the 24-hour solar day view and the day-age view (period of indeterminate length) of interpreting *yom* in Genesis 1. Include arguments for each view.
2. Discuss the different non-actual day views of Genesis 1 (symbolic/logical, allegorical, revelational, framework), explaining the core ideas of each, and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches.
3. Analyze how the different views of the days in Genesis 1 engage with scientific findings and explain why it matters if the Genesis account is to be understood in a literal or non-literal way.
4. Critically evaluate the framework hypothesis, including its proposed literary structure, and discuss why this view is so prevalent among contemporary evangelicals.
5. Considering the various approaches to the days of Genesis 1, what are the implications for how we understand the authority and interpretation of the Bible?

Glossary

- **Yom (יוֹם):** The Hebrew word for "day," which can refer to a 24-hour solar day or a period of time, depending on context.
- **Solar Day:** A period of 24 hours, measured by the rotation of the Earth relative to the sun.
- **Day-Age Theory:** The view that the "days" in Genesis 1 represent long, indeterminate periods of time during which God's creative activity took place.
- **Restitution/Gap Theory:** An interpretation that proposes a gap in time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, where geological ages and other events occurred, followed by a re-creation in six 24-hour days.
- **Inter-Period Theory:** An understanding that there were long periods of time between each of the six 24-hour days of Genesis 1, allowing geological time to fit into the narrative of Genesis 1.
- **Symbolic/Logical Order View:** An interpretation of the Genesis "days" as symbolic of the logical order of creation, rather than literal days.
- **Allegorical View:** An interpretation of the Genesis "days" as spiritual experiences of the creature in returning to praise and love the creator.
- **Revelational Day View:** The concept that the "days" of Genesis 1 represent a six-day period in which God revealed the creation narrative to Moses, rather than the days of actual creation.
- **Framework Hypothesis:** The view that the days in Genesis 1 are a literary framework or structure rather than actual, chronological periods of time.
- **Tridoms:** A term referring to two sets of three days in the framework hypothesis model of Genesis 1, used to demonstrate a parallelism of days 1-3 and 4-6.
- **Obscurantist:** One who deliberately prevents something from being known or understood.
- **Traducianism:** A theological theory that posits the human soul is transmitted from parents to offspring.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Genesis, Session 6, Genesis 1 “Days” [Yom] – Theories of Interpretation, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Okay, here's an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source, formatted with markdown:

FAQ on the Interpretation of Genesis 1

- **What are the main interpretations of the word "yom" (day) in Genesis 1?**
- The primary interpretations of "yom" in Genesis 1 fall into two broad categories: "actual days" and "non-actual days." Within "actual days," there's the 24-hour solar day view and the view of "yom" as a period of time of indeterminate length (also known as the Day-Age view). The 24-hour solar day view can further be broken down into: 7 successive 24-hour days, the restitution/gap theory where geologic time falls before the 6 creation days, and the inter-period theory where geologic time is interspersed between the six 24-hour creation days. Non-actual days, on the other hand, include symbolic or logical order days (like Origen's view), allegorical days (like Augustine's view), and revelational days (where the days are of God revealing creation to Moses), and finally, the framework hypothesis which posits that the days are simply a literary device with no chronological significance.
- **What arguments support the view that the "days" in Genesis 1 are 24-hour solar days?**
- The arguments for 24-hour solar days include: (1) the primary meaning of "yom" usually signifies a solar day; (2) the phrase "evening and morning" reinforces the understanding of a solar day; and (3) the analogy in Exodus 20:9-11 where God worked for six days and rested on the seventh, implying that the days are consistent in Genesis 1 and Exodus 20.

- **What arguments support the "Day-Age" view, where each "day" represents a long, indeterminate period of time?**
- Several arguments support the Day-Age view: (1) the word "yom" has flexibility in its meaning throughout the Old Testament; (2) the heavenly bodies used to measure solar days are not created until the fourth day; (3) the phrase "evening and morning" can be seen as marking the beginning and end of a period rather than literal solar days; (4) the activities on the sixth day, such as creating animals, man, the garden and naming all of the animals, seem to require more time than a literal 24-hour day; (5) the seventh day, God's day of rest, appears to be a continuing period of time rather than a 24-hour solar day.
- **What is the "framework hypothesis," and why is it considered a "non-actual day" view?**
- The framework hypothesis views the days of Genesis 1 as a literary framework, a structure used to convey the creation narrative, with no chronological implications. The days are seen as a literary device, not as actual periods of creation. This view is "non-actual" because it removes any sense of a historical sequence or temporal correspondence between the days and the creative acts of God. Proponents see parallels between days 1-3 and 4-6, with the seventh day as a distinct climax, emphasizing that creation is well-ordered.
- **How do the symbolic, allegorical, and revelational interpretations view the "days" in Genesis 1?**
- The symbolic or logical view (Origen) sees the days as indicative of the logical order of creation and not historical events. The allegorical view (Augustine) interprets "day" as representing the spiritual experiences of the creature in relation to the creator. The revelational view (Wiseman) argues that the days refer to a six day period during which God revealed the story of creation to Moses, rather than the time of the actual creation.

- **What is the significance of the order of creation events in Genesis 1, especially in the context of the different views about the "days"?**
- The significance of the order of creation events is a point of contention. Those who hold to the 24-hour day or Day-Age view see a direct historical and sequential account of God's creative acts. The framework hypothesis removes that emphasis on sequence by focusing on the literary framework itself, not a timeline. The logical and allegorical approaches focus on the meaning and experience of those days as concepts, not historical markers. The revelational day focuses on the revelatory sequence rather than a historical creative one.

- **What is the relationship between scientific discoveries and biblical interpretation, especially concerning Genesis 1?**
- The lecture stresses that believers should not be hostile to science but must distinguish between well-established scientific facts and unfounded scientific theories. While it is improper to twist biblical texts to fit scientific theories, scientific discoveries can prompt a reexamination of biblical texts. The scientific data may stimulate a more careful analysis of scripture, to see if the text is more broad in its scope than initially perceived.
- **How does the debate about the length of the days affect the overall message of Genesis 1?**

The lecture emphasizes that the most important message of Genesis 1 is not about the length of the days, but about God, man, and the universe. The discussion of the length of days is not meant to overshadow the larger themes such as God as creator, man as being made in the image of God, the creation as good, and God's provision for creation. While these are important interpretive considerations, they should not overshadow the larger theological implications present within the chapter.