

## Book Review

*Seven Days That Divide The World* by John C. Lennox, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan: 2011, pp. 192, \$16.99, ISBN: 978-0-310-49217-7.

John Lennox attempts to articulate a position on the days of Genesis 1 in which he advances the notion of progressive creationism. This position affirms that the first six days of Genesis 1 are possibly twenty-four hour periods of time, but that each day is separated by vast stretches of time and so accommodates the theory of evolution regarding the age of the universe, the age of the earth and the age of man. Lennox's view is unique in that he also believes that the seventh day is an eternal day. Consequently, he does not believe that the seven days refer to one creation week.

Lennox attempts to ground his position in the context both grammatical and lexical of Genesis chapter one. But, the change in chronology of Genesis one, destroys the entire chronology of the Bible. The chronology of the Bible is given in a historic context and is interwoven with the people, places and events that relate the history of the Messiah (Jesus Christ). Lennox does not attempt to deal with this massive argument against his theory. The time from the creation of Adam to the crucifixion of Jesus is 4075 years (see Philip Mauro's book on the *Wonders of Bible Chronology*). This period of time does not fit Lennox's chronology of the age of the universe, the age of the earth, nor the history of man.

Lennox's progressive creationism is another attempt to harmonize the Genesis account of creation with the theory of evolution. These attempts are doomed to failure from the start. There can be no compromise of the doctrine of creation with the theory of evolution (especially regarding the chronology and the origin of life including humans).

Lennox's book begins with an introduction and is divided into five chapters. Following these five chapters, Lennox includes five appendices. The book ends with notes, acknowledgements and a general index.

In the Introduction, Lennox addresses the controversy that exists in attempting to explain the first chapter of Genesis and the "days" of creation. He writes as an apologist of sorts that is moved to defend Christianity from attacks of being unscientific or antiscientific. However, he also believes that if we accept the creation account as historical and literal, we will prevent people from accepting Christianity. Lennox states, "Ussher gave 4004 BC as the date for the origin of the earth. His calculation, based on taking the days of Genesis 1 as twenty-four-hour days of one earth week at the beginning of the universe, is six orders of magnitude away from the current scientific estimate of around four billion years" (p. 12). This statement forms the basis of the controversy between religion and science regarding the chronology of the age of the earth (also, the age of the universe and the history of man). Lennox rejects a historical and literal reading of Genesis 1 regarding the chronology. The controversy is summarized as between "young earth" creationists and "old earth" creationists.

In chapter one, Lennox gives a historical illustration of the misinterpretation of the Scriptures with regard to the earth being fixed in the centre of the universe and that the sun, stars, and planets revolved around it (p. 16). Several theologians, including Aristotle and Aquinas, affirmed the "earth-centric" view. However, Copernicus, in 1543, presented his scientific theory that the earth and the planets orbited the sun. This new theory clashed with the "earth-centric" view and was opposed by men such as Martin Luther. In 1632, Galileo challenged the Aristotelian view and was met with opposition. The heliocentric view emerged as the

predominant and correct view.

In Chapter two, Lennox focuses on how the Bible is to be understood. He shows that some passages are to be understood literally and others figuratively. He states, “the crucial thing about Christianity’s fundamental doctrines is that they are first and foremost to be understood in their natural, primary sense” (p. 22). This is true. Then, Lennox affirms that this statement must be qualified. He acknowledges that some words in scripture are used figuratively. This is also true. When considering any text of scripture, the interpreter must first consider the passage to be literal before moving to a figurative or metaphorical meaning.

In Chapter three, Lennox begins to give his exegesis of Genesis 1. First, he acknowledges that there are two predominant views of the age of the universe, the earth and man: the young universe and the ancient universe view. Lennox believes in the ancient universe view. He shows that both views have been held by various individuals going back for a long time. But, he admits that the understanding of the days of Genesis as twenty-four-hour days seems to have been the dominant view for many centuries (p. 42).

Lennox rightly expresses that the major tension in the interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis is the difference between holding that the verses are historical and thus literal and believing that they are figurative, theological language (p. 42). Only the early chapters of Genesis are considered figurative, (He is referring to Genesis 1-11-DS), because the rest of the book is considered to be historical. Lennox gives three main views of the days of Genesis 1: (1) the 24-hour day; (2) the day-age view; and (3) the framework view. Lennox also mentions a variation of the framework view called “the cosmic temple view” held by John Walton (p. 46). Lennox’s own view of the “days” of Genesis 1 is a synthesis of each of the three dominant views mentioned.

Lennox begins his own exegesis of Genesis 1. He believes the passage is a chronological sequence of events (p. 48). He affirms that any reader of any age would recognize the similarity between the creation week and the human working week. He begins his analysis of the meaning of the word “day” (Hebrew—*yom*) by noting the different senses in which the word is used in Genesis 1 (p. 50). There are four different senses mentioned. One of those senses, found in Gen. 1:5, is the twenty-four-hour day. Lennox can be challenged on his interpretation of the seventh day. On this day God rested. Lennox believes that the seventh day is eternal (p. 50, “...God sanctified the seventh day by making it an epoch that extends onward into eternity...”). This interpretation would not harmonize with Exodus 20:11 where the Sabbath day is clearly a reference to a twenty-four-hour period. Lennox affirms that there is a “gap” between Gen. 1:1-2 and Gen. 1:3. He argues that the verb *created* in Gen. 1:1 is in the perfect tense and the normal use of the perfect tense at the beginning of a pericope is to denote an event that took place before the storyline gets underway (p. 52). He comments, “This implies that “the beginning” of Genesis 1:1 did not necessarily take place on day 1 as is frequently assumed. The initial creation took place before day 1, but Genesis does not tell us how long before. This means that the question of the age of the earth (and of the universe) is a separate question from the interpretation of the days, a point that is frequently overlooked” (p. 53). Lennox fails to give all of the grammatical details of Genesis 1:1-2. Gen. 1:1 begins the narrative. Gen. 1:2 is a *waw* disjunctive. Justin Rogers makes the following remarks on Genesis 1:1-2, “When the *waw* is attached to a noun, as it is in Genesis 1:2, it is disjunctive, and thus signals a shift in the narrative. This shift does not necessarily imply a different series of events, much less events separated by billions of years in time...Sometimes, however, the disjunctive *waw* can simply provide background information for the story being related (e. g. Genesis 13:13), or explain what is happening simultaneous with the

narrative, but elsewhere in location (e. g. Genesis 37:36, translated well as “meanwhile” in the ESV). In these cases, the *waw* sets up a parenthetical remark which functions to explain the preceding information. This is, I believe, what we have in Genesis 1:2” (“Is Gap Theory Linguistically Viable?” *Reason and Revelation*, December, 2015, 140). Gen. 1:3 has the *waw* consecutive. So, the narrative begins in Gen. 1:1 and continues with verse 3. Verse 2 is a parenthetical remark which explains verse 1. Lennox rejects the young earth view (p. 53). In doing so, he must reject every chronological statement made in the Bible from Genesis 1 forward!

Lennox gives his own view of the “days” of Genesis 1. “However, there is another possibility: that the writer did not intend us to think of the first six days as days of a single earth week, but rather as a sequence of six *creation* days: that is, days of normal length (with evenings and mornings as the text says) in which God acted to create something new, but days that might well have been separated by long periods of time” (p. 54). Lennox affirms that there is a “gap” between Gen. 1:1-2 and Gen. 1:3 and he affirms that the individual days might well have been separated from one another by unspecified periods of time” (p. 54). Consequently, Lennox affirms the “ancient earth” view. This view goes against the natural, plain, straightforward reading of the text and thus it goes against the *clarity* of the Scriptures and violates one of the first rules of interpretation of the Scriptures that a text is to be taken in its literal sense unless there is some compelling reason for moving to a figurative sense. Lennox assumes that the chronology of evolutionary theory is correct and that the Bible must be re-interpreted to fit this evolutionary chronology. He does not prove the chronology of evolutionary theory anywhere in his book. This is a glaring error of omission on such a crucial topic.

How does Lennox interpret Exodus 20:11? He states, “God’s week is a pattern for ours, but it is not identical. Thus Exodus 20:8-11 does not *demand* that the days of Genesis 1 be the days of a single week, although it could of course be interpreted that way” (p. 57). In view of Lennox’s interpretation of the days of Genesis 1 and the gaps of millions of years between them, how could he properly interpret Exodus 20:8-11? His interpretation could not logically fit the context of Exodus 20:11. Lennox hedged on the interpretation of this passage because he knows that his own logic fails to properly explain it. He rejects the idea of a literal work week consisting of six days of work and rest on the seventh day as being parallel to the creation week.

Lennox then states that we should not overemphasize the differences between some of the views mentioned in this chapter. “No major doctrine of Scripture is affected by whether one believes that the days are analogical days (as per C. John Collins-DS) or that each day is a long period of time inaugurated by God speaking, or whether one believes that each of the days is a normal day in which God spoke, followed by a long period of putting into effect the information contained in what God said on that particular day” (p. 58). This statement is false. Lennox is basically saying that it does not make any difference how you interpret the days of Genesis 1. But, it does make a difference because the **clarity** of Scripture is at stake. Can we know and understand what God revealed about how He created the universe, the earth and man? After all, God was there and we were not. The **doctrine of creation** is at stake. The doctrine of creation is not compatible with the theory of macroevolution. The **chronology** of the Bible is at stake. If Lennox is correct, the entire chronology of the Bible is destroyed. This chronology is given by inspiration of God and God cannot lie. The **veracity** of the Scriptures is at stake. The chronology is intimately tied to the history of the coming of the Messiah into the world. If you destroy the chronology of the Bible, you destroy the history of the Messiah. Consequently, the

**doctrine of Christ** (Christology) is at stake and the **doctrine of our salvation** is at stake (Soteriology).

On page 55, Lennox shows how his interpretation of Genesis 1 involves a synthesis of the three dominant interpretations of the “days” of Genesis: (1) 24 hour days of a regular work week. For Lennox six of the days are 24-hour days and the seventh day is eternal. Also, he believes the “days” are separated by eons of time and so do not represent a regular work week. (2) the day-age theory. Lennox accepts that the seventh day is an “age” and is actually eternal (unending). (3) the framework view. Lennox accepts the seventh day as an “age” and he also believes the creation days inaugurate a period of outworking, but is not coterminous with that period. This is an interpretive synthesis that no ancient person could possibly have deduced from reading Genesis 1 or Exodus 20:11!

Lennox takes up the problem of the fourth day by posing this question, “If there is a chronological dimension to the days, how is it that the sun was made on day 4?” (p. 58). If the sun does not appear until day 4, how are we to understand the first three days with their “evenings and mornings?” Lennox states, “That is, the verse is speaking about God appointing the role of the sun and moon in the cosmos, and not speaking of either their creation or their appearing” (p. 59). The problem with this explanation is that it **contradicts** the Bible. Any interpretation of the Bible that contradicts a plain passage of Scripture is false. The problem is resolved by accepting exactly what God said that God did. We know that there are many sources of light other than the Sun. We also know that this created light source seems fixed. The earth was rotating on its axis. The fixed light source that God created produced the evenings and mornings. This light source was supernatural and provided light until the fourth day when the sun, moon and stars were created. The attempt to re-write the Bible by Lennox is indicative of the efforts of evolutionists and is really an act of unbelief.

In chapter four, Lennox addresses the question of the antiquity of humanity. He believes that human beings were created in the image of God by a special act of creation. Here, he parts company with evolutionists. He does not believe that human beings evolved from lower life forms and as a result are no different than the animals that make up the animal kingdom. However, he does not accept the genealogical information and the chronological information intertwined with those statements as accurately representing how long man has been on the earth. He remarks, “...on the internal evidence of Scripture, the dating of the age of humanity is indeterminate” (p. 75). He also states, “...it is important not to confuse things that differ, namely, the age of the universe, the age of the earth, the age of life, and the age of humanity. Clearly, the earth is younger than the universe, biological life is younger than the earth, and human life is younger than biological life” (p. 75). According to the evolutionary chronology, the universe is nearly 14 billion years old. The earth is 4 to 5 billion years old and human life is only about 200,000 years old. There is no possible way to harmonize this chronology with the chronology of the Bible. Consequently, Lennox must deny *all* of the chronology of the Bible beginning with Genesis 1. The Bible gives the time from the creation of Adam to the crucifixion of Christ as 4075 years (see Philip Mauro, *The Wonders of Bible Chronology*). Also, Jesus himself places the first man and first woman “at the beginning” (Matt. 19:4). This is a reference to the beginning of Genesis 1:1. Man was created on the sixth day of creation placing him at the beginning. How would Lennox explain Matt. 19:4 in light of evolutionary chronology?

Lennox accepts Genesis 3 as historical/literal and rejects the mythological view. He does this on the grounds that Genesis 3 relates to our redemption through Jesus Christ, the seed of Genesis 3:15. Lennox is aware that interpretive changes in the early chapters of Genesis affect

our salvation through Jesus Christ. If he could only realize that this is the case regarding the biblical chronology as well, he would abandon the attempt to harmonize Genesis 1 with evolutionary chronology.

Lennox correctly deduces that plant and animal death occurred before the fall, but that human death occurred after the fall. Evil did exist before the fall in the person of Satan who presented as a serpent in the Garden of Eden (see also Romans 5:12 and Jeff Miller's article in Reason and Revelation, *Could There Have Been Any Death Before the Fall?*, August, 2016 pp. 74-80).

Lennox affirms that "science is not infallible: theories change..." (p. 86). In contrast to this statement, the Bible is infallible. Yet, Lennox contorts the Scriptures to fit an unproven evolutionary theory. Are Christians anti-intellectual because they reject the theory of evolution? Lennox rejects part of this theory himself. Should we conclude that he is anti-intellectual? Are Christians arrogant because we accept the Bible over pseudo-science? Remember, Lennox does not believe that man evolved from lower life forms.

In chapter five, Lennox looks at the message of Genesis 1. Lennox believes that Genesis 1 lays the foundation for the biblical worldview. He affirms that Genesis 1 teaches that: (1) God exists; (2) God is the eternal creator; (3) God is distinct from His creation; (4) God is personal; (5) God is a tri-unity, a fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (p. 97); (6) God has a goal in creation: the earth was specifically designed as a home for human beings; (7) God creates by His word; (8) God is the source of light; (9) The goodness of creation; and (10) the Sabbath.

Appendix A is dedicated to identifying the genre of Genesis 1. Lennox believes that Genesis 1 is nonpoetic narrative (p. 120). He affirms the Mosaic authorship of the book and dates it from fifteenth to thirteenth centuries BC. The evidence of the Old Testament and the New Testament points to a historical view of Genesis 1 by those living at that time. There is a sharp contrast between mythological accounts of the creation such as *Enuma Elish*, a Babylonian writing, and Genesis 1.

Appendix B focuses on the Comic Temple View advanced by Gordon Wenham and Rikki E. Watts. Watts hold that Genesis 1 is a poetic account in which Yahweh, Israel's god, is proclaimed the builder of creation, his palace-temple (p. 130). Another writer, John Walton, also affirms the Cosmic Temple View. Each of these individuals seeks to make some connection between the temple and the cosmos. Lennox rejects Walton's "functional" interpretation of Genesis 1 and holds to the material aspect of the creation.

Appendix C addresses the main agreement between the Bible and Science, namely, that the universe had a beginning (p. 150). Lennox believes that the Big Bang theory and the creation account in Genesis 1 are different kinds of explanations of the same event. On pages 151-152 he gives quotations of the description of the Big Bang. Later he states, "There is a certain irony here, in that the very same Big Bang cosmological model of the universe that confirms the biblical claim that there was a beginning also implies that the universe is very old" (p. 154). This seems to be the basis for Lennox's affirmation that the universe is very old in contrast to the young universe, young earth view. On this basis, Lennox re-interprets Genesis 1.

Appendix D deals with Genesis 1 and 2—Two Counts of Creation? Lennox addresses the problem: "does the account of creation given in Genesis 2 contradict any chronology based on Genesis 1?" Does Genesis 1 describe the creation of plants before man and Genesis 2 describe the creation of plants after humans? Lennox references C. John Collins who affirms that Genesis 2 has nothing to do with the original creation of plants on day 3. Instead, the passage teaches that at a particular time of the yearly cycle in a particular land, before the plants

had started to grow, God created human beings (p. 157). Lennox develops the argument further: “Now this reading of the text clearly assumes that the cycle of nature has been established long enough for it to be relevant, so that, in order to harmonize it with the events of day 6, one must conclude, as Collins points out, either that the creation days of Genesis 1 are not (all) ordinary, or that they are separated by time” (p. 157). Collins regards the first of these alternatives as true. Lennox upholds the second option or a variant of it.

Lennox goes on to state that there is another solution to the problem. The account of the first creation is given in chronological order and that of Genesis 2 is logical rather than chronological (p. 158). Henry Morris states that it is possible to interpret these verses as affirming that in the days prior to the creation of plants on the third day (the second and third days), the earth was watered by a mist (the change in temperature between daytime and nighttime was adequate to energize daily evaporation from each local body of water and its condensation as dew and fog in the surrounding area each night. The narrative then skips the fourth and fifth days of creation and proceeds to give a more detailed description of the process of creating man on the sixth day (*The Genesis Record*, pp. 84-85). Genesis 2:8, describes an act of God planting a garden eastward in Eden. This is a separate act of God from the initial creation of plants on day three.

Appendix E provides Lennox with the opportunity to address Theistic Evolution and the God of the Gaps. Lennox postulates, “According to Genesis, then, creation involved not just one, but a sequence of several discrete creation acts after which God rested (remember Lennox believes that the first six *days* of creation were separated by billions of years—DS). This surely implies that those acts involved processes that are not going on at the moment. Of course, such (supernatural) creation acts (“from above”) would appear to science (“from below”) as discontinuities or singularities, a suggestion that is highly unpalatable to scientists in general and biologists in particular” (p. 161). The phrase, *God of the gaps*, was coined to deride the notion that God can be invoked as an explanation whenever scientists have gaps in their understanding. Lennox, on the other hand, affirms this very thing when he says that the phrase “and God said...” indicates a new act of creation with the acts of creation separated by billions of years. This notion is a contradiction of theistic evolutionists who hold that “life is the fruitful outworking, according to the God-given laws of nature, of the potential built into the capabilities of matter by God at the beginning without the need for further discrete intervention (p. 162). Theistic evolutionists believe that God created the heavens and earth initially and then used evolution to complete the development of nature and life. Lennox, a progressive creationist, rejects this and affirms that God actually created at successive times, separated by billions of years, each of the new aspects of creation. Lennox quotes from Francis Collins to show the definition of theistic evolution and confirms that Collins is a theistic evolutionist. He also references C. S. Lewis who was a theistic evolutionist. Lennox also shows that Collins believes that at some point in time, God acted to confer His image on a hominid that had already emerged from the evolutionary process in order to make man (p. 163). This shows the difficulty that theistic evolutionists have in separating human beings from animals if biological evolution is the mechanism of creation. Collins and others affirm that God intervened at some point to confer His image on a hominid (precursor to man). Some theistic evolutionists deny this and so there is much variety among such men when attempting to explain the difference between humans and animals. When you abandon the Scriptures, there is no definite knowledge about such. Michael Behe, also a theistic evolutionist, believes that God moved atoms on many occasions in the evolutionary process (intervened on many occasions to input intelligence into the whole

evolutionary process—DS) (see p. 164). Lennox agrees with some aspects of theistic evolution and disagrees with others. His “progressive creationism” accepts the cosmology and physics of evolution regarding chronology, but rejects the biology of evolutionary theory (see pp. 165-166). According to Lennox, God uses evolution to form galaxies, suns, and planets, but He does not use it to form life, especially human life. Consequently, he believes that God intervenes at different times with “singularities” that he defines as supernatural, but not necessarily miraculous events (p. 169). He affirms, “Life does not emerge from nonlife without God having to get directly involved and speak his word” (p. 172). Lennox does not believe that there is a naturalistic theory that explains the origin of life. Lennox advances this argument to help prove his affirmation—“Unguided natural processes do not generate language-type information found in RNA and DNA” (p. 175). The evolutionary process could not produce the information needed to support life. This is a problem for evolutionists and theistic evolutionists (p. 175).

Lennox also deals with the argument from biological evolutionists (which Lennox has parted company from) that the molecular evidence for the evolutionary interrelatedness of all life is essentially conclusive (p. 178). Here, Lennox responds by saying that the difference between animals and humans is a “quantum” difference (p. 178). “A chimp may share 98% of its DNA with ourselves but it is not 98% human: it is not human at all—it is a chimp” (p. 178). Lennox affirms, “Similarities may be the result of design as distinct from descent; or, indeed, from a combination of the two, as selective breeding demonstrates” (p. 178). Lennox debunks the notion that natural selection can produce innovation (new information) and be the creative force in evolution. Lennox closes this study with an affirmation that he believes in the God of the gaps. While he believes this, he also indicts evolutionist for believing in an evolution of the gaps.

A major flaw of Lennox’s book is that he assumes that science has proven the earth is about four billion years old. Then, he attempts to reinterpret Genesis 1 to fit the science. His presupposition leads to an *eisegesis* of the passage where he reads into it what is not there. This causes him to make words figurative that are actually literal. And, he also gives contorted grammatical explanations of Gen. 1:1-3 so affirm the gap theory. So, he rejects that the days of Genesis 1 are normal 24-hour periods making one earth week. This produces more problems for him in passages like Exodus 20:11, where he has to explain away the natural, literal meaning. In the end, he contradicts the Bible repeatedly.

Lennox pleads for humility in studying this subject because he realizes how controversial it is (p. 87). The controversy is justified due to the importance of the doctrine of creation, the clarity of the Scriptures, the veracity of the Scriptures, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of salvation. Since God (the Triune God) was present at the creation of all things and God told us exactly what He did, we should be willing to accept it. “Let God be true and every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4). Whenever men contradict what God plainly says that He did, those who love the truth have no choice but to “fight the good fight of faith” (I Tim. 6:12). This is not arrogance. It is love for the truth!