

## Statement regarding Creation

The debate over the length of the time involved in the Genesis Creation account is one that has gained increased attention in recent years with the publication of several academic works on various sides of the question. Therefore, as a church with many teaching ministries, including a Christian school ministry, we want to be clear about what we believe the Scripture teaches on such debated topics and related issues. While we may teach viewpoints other than that which we hold, we will be clear about what we believe and why. Toward that end, the following is DCC's stated position on the subject of Creation.

### Preliminary Notes:

- 1) The view one holds on the subject of Creation is not, by itself, a salvation issue. DCC holds to the biblical teaching that man is saved by grace through faith alone (Eph. 2:8-9). Therefore, we recognize the doctrine of Creation as "secondary" to primary doctrines such as those of salvation and the nature and work of the Triune God.
- 2) The understanding of Creation is a philosophical and hermeneutical issue, and therefore important. How one understands the Creation account and how to interpret the Scriptures is influenced by where one begins philosophically, and especially what place general revelation (i.e. scientific observation) has in the discussion.
- 3) Interpretation of the Genesis account of Creation *may* limit one's ability to be involved in the teaching ministries of Damascus Community Church. DCC has chosen to teach what we believe to be the clearest and most natural reading of the historical narrative of the Creation account found in the book of Genesis, and we believe it is a viable interpretation of evidence discovered through scientific inquiry.

### Damascus Community Church teaches

The following statements outline DCC's understanding of the truths regarding creation.

- 1) ***Special revelation is greater than general revelation.*** While we believe that God reveals Himself both through the Scriptures (special revelation) and through the created world (general revelation), we believe the Bible to be divinely inspired, propositional truth, and therefore more authoritative than what can be deduced from human scientific observation. Consequently, while we recognize the value of operational science (i.e. scientific method), we affirm the Bible as our presuppositional foundation, and when properly interpreted, the standard by which we measure the accuracy of interpretations of scientific data.
- 2) ***Genesis as historical-narrative.*** Contrary to some theories, we believe (with Jesus, ex. Mt. 19:3–6, 24:38-39; Mk. 10:3–9, John 3:14, 6:32–33, 49, Luke 17:28–32) that the book of Genesis, including chapters 1 and 2, is an historical narrative

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rather than simply poetic or figurative. Therefore, we teach that the creation account of Genesis 1 and 2 is to be understood sequentially and in its most natural historical-grammatical reading. This interpretative philosophy leads us to understand creation as a recent (thousands not billions of years), 24-hour, successive, 6-day creation.<sup>1</sup>

- 3) **Meaning of “Day.”** While the Hebrew word for “day” (*yom*) can be used in Scripture to describe an indefinite amount of time, context must determine how the word should be interpreted in any given passage. In most cases, *yom* refers to an ordinary 24-hour day. In cases where it doesn’t, the context makes that clear (ex. Nah. 1:7; Isaiah 28:19)

Therefore, for the following reasons, we understand *yom* in Genesis 1 & 2 to refer to a literal 24-hour day when it is used to describe the length of each day of Creation:

- In Genesis 1, whenever the word “day” is modified by an ordinal number (first, second, third, etc.) it is preceded by the phrase “and there was evening and there was morning.” The most natural reading of this is an ordinary, literal, 24-hour day (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). Further, the words “evening” and “morning” are combined with “day” (*yom*) 19 times outside of Genesis 1, and in each, they refer to a literal 24-hour day.<sup>2</sup>
- In Genesis 1, when “day” refers to something other than an ordinary day, it is not qualified by “and there was evening and there was morning.” In these cases, it is often stated in contrast to “night” (Gen. 1:5, 14, 16, 18). This indicates a reference to the “daylight” time of the 24-hour day.
- Though the reference to the seventh day in Gen. 2:2-3 is not preceded by “and there was evening and there was morning,” the ordinal number *is* again used. To be consistent in its context, the most natural reading of “day,” therefore, is a literal 24-hour day.
- Other scriptural examples:
  - Exodus 20:8-11 clarify the days of creation and seventh day of rest as literal 24-hour days. These verses show that the days of creation are used as the basis for the human work week and Sabbath day of rest.
  - 2 Peter 3:8 is often used to argue that a “day” can equal a thousand years. However, this argument fails on two counts. First, Peter’s purpose in this statement is to show that God is not bound by time, not to argue for a non-literal 24-hour day. Second, if the “day” Peter is referring to here is not a literal 24-hour day, then the meaning of “years” is also in question making the comparison meaningless.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Stephen Boyd has done research on the use of Hebrew verbs in the Genesis account. His study concludes “it is not statistically defensible to read Genesis 1:1–2:3 as poetry.” “The Biblical Hebrew Creation Account: New Numbers Tell the Story” in *Impact: Vital Articles on Science/Creation*. Available: <http://www.icr.org/i/pdf/imp/imp-377.pdf>. Accessed 04/23/13.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2004), 81.

- 4) **A mature creation.** We affirm, based on Gen. 1:1, that God supernaturally created a mature heavens and the earth, *ex-nihilo* (“out of nothing”) and in six 24-hour days. We believe this for the following reasons:
- God is able to defy His “laws” of nature and do the supernatural (Ex. 10:19; 14:21; Josh. 10:13; Mk. 4:39).
  - The best rendering of the Hebrew word “*bara*” (Gen. 1:1) is “to create” as in the initiating of an object that had not existed before (cf. Rom. 4:17; 2 Cor. 4:6; Heb. 11:3). The Hebrew word “*asah*,” (“revealed”; “shaped”) is also used in reference to the creation of the heavens and earth and to mankind (Exodus 20:11 and Genesis 1:26 respectively). While this has led some to argue against an *ex-nihilo* creation, these two events are also described in Gen. 1:1 and 1:27 using the word “*bara*” indicating an interchangeable use of the two words to describe a creation “out of nothing.”
  - God created an adult man and a woman physically mature enough to be commanded to procreate (Gen. 1:27-28) from the beginning, and without evidence for a long evolutionary process (cf. Mk. 10:6).
  - By day three of creation, the Garden of Eden already had vegetation, plants yielding seeds, and fruit trees producing fruit (Gen. 1:11-13).
- 5) **Death and sin.** When God finished His creative work on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, he declared it “very good” (Gen. 1:31). For it to be such, it could not have included disease or death as these are part of the curse that was placed on all creation because of man’s sin (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:14, 17-19; cf. Rom. 5:12, 14, 17; 8:19-22). Therefore, death was not part of God’s original “very good” creation, including the death of animals. Because plants, unlike animals and man, are not considered “alive” according to the biblical designation of the Hebrew “*nephesh chayyah*” (“living soul”; Gen. 1:11, 20-21, 24, 30; 2:7), death was not necessary for food, and therefore, man and animals could be vegetarian prior to the Fall (Gen. 1:29-30) without the need for disease and death. Animal fossils, therefore, containing the remains of other animals can be better explained as evidence for a global catastrophic flood than for a pre-Fall, long-term, progressive creation.
- 6) **The Flood.** We believe in a post-Fall, year-long, global, catastrophic flood (Genesis 6-8; cf. Matt. 24:37-39; 2 Peter 3:5-7; ) as the explanation for the majority of fossil layers, and for the diversity of fossil types found worldwide, and other geological features of the present earth. We believe that modern science gives evidence for a global Flood, and the biblical account offers a sufficient explanation for the created animal “kinds” and the variety and groupings within each kind (Gen. 1:11-13, 20-25; 6:20, 7:14).