

## Do there Biblical foundations of scientific creationism really exist?

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The scientific creationism, presented now by many researches, was actually founded by H.Morris and was proclaimed by him as a views system, based on the Bible[1].

Three main postulates, accepted by all creationists, are included in this system without fail. These postulates are as follows:

- 1.The world is created by the Creator “ex nihilo” in 6 calendar days.
- 2.Plants and animals were created “after their kinds” during this period. Separate classes of animals and plants have no evolutionary links. There was no evolutionary “tree”.
- 3.Not more than 10 thousand years have passed since the days of creation.

The postulates mentioned we will designate further as “Main Postulates of Creation Paradigm” (MPCP).

MPCP are traditional for the Orthodox Church and can be unambiguously founded on the base of Orthodox Saint Tradition [3],[4],[5],[7],[9].

However, these MPCP, as it was claimed by H.Morris and is affirmed by his followers – creationists of Protestant orientation-can be strictly founded with the help of the exegetical method *Solo Scriptura*. In the frames of this method, the interpreter of St.Scripture uses only its text and his own considerations for the analysis of the texts, using parallel places in the Bible for revealing the meanings presented in the particular passage (the principle called *Scripture by Scripture*). (“A basic principle of understanding a Bible passage is to compare the use of words and phrases with other parts of the Bible” [2, p.39]).

Can we assert that the use of the mentioned method unequivocally leads to the MPCP? We will try to answer this question using these indicated exegetical ways.

For that let us mentally imagine ourselves in the role of a Protestant neophyte, not very much encumbered by traditions and authoritative opinions, who tries to decide the problem without assistance by using the Hebrew text<sup>1</sup> and Septuagint. Both these texts of the Bible are authoritative primary sources and both are quoted in the books of the New Testament. Let us see what results from this.

### 1.The problem of days of creation

Thus, our Protestant neophyte reads sequentially the first and then the second chapter of book of Genesis in Hebrew. And he will meet for the first time with the word יוֹם (yôm=day) in Gen1,5: **And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.** It is quite clear that the application of the word “day” for the designation of the daylight does not excite any perplexities. This word yôm is present also in the second part of the same verse: **And the evening and the**

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<sup>1</sup> Let us suppose that he uses *Steve Gross' ASCII Transliterated Tanach*, stored at [israel.nysernet.org](http://israel.nysernet.org)

**morning were the first day.** Our neophyte collided again with the same word but used in a somewhat other meaning, which seems also to be clear but different from the first use of the word “day”. In this situation the most natural and the first occurred interpretation of the word “day” used here will be “twenty-four hours” – calendar day, especially as the context seems to indicate to the changes of the parts of the day during this first day of creation. Nevertheless, it should be immediately noticed, that there is no direct indication in the Hebrew text, that these **evening and the morning** mentioned make up **the first day**. Colons, dashes, and other textual tools for showing the “making up” which are present in many translations, are consequences of interpretations. The similar situation is with other days of creation of Gen.1. (The Hebrew text of Gen.1 does not contain any indication that “evenings and mornings” do *make up* days of creation. We can also add, that such indications are also absent in the same chapter of Septuagint. Therefore, strictly speaking, if one would translate the second part of the verse Gen.1,5 literally, the translation should be: **And there was evening and there was morning, one day**(as it was made in *New American Standard Bible*). If this version of perception of the text is applied, it seems quite possible to interpret the words **there was evening and there was morning**, in Gen1,5 and further in the similar places (Gen 1,8; Gen 1, 13, Gen 1,19, Gen 1,23, Gen 1,31)as a simple indication to the cyclic running of the time. In so doing the “days” (*yôms*) can have no simple *making up* relationship with evenings and mornings, as it is supposed in many translations (e.g. in the quoted above).)

Our neophyte reading Gen.1 further will find some more similar passages related to the days of creation. These are respectively: 8,13,19,23 and 31 verses of the first chapter of Genesis. These verses tell him about each day of creation in quite the same way as Gen.1,5 tells about the first –that is like about “twenty-four hours” – calendar days. It seems that everything is clear...

Our neophyte continues his reading of the Hebrew text and passes to the Ch.2 of Genesis. Here he meets the word *yôm*, which was used, as it seemed, in the previous chapter for designation of daylight and calendar days, but in some very strange context (Gen.2,4-5):

**These [are] the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day ([in the day]= ביום -*beyôm*) that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, 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.**

It should be noted that this passage can be translated from Hebrew *doubly*. If one uses the first way, then this *yôm* will embrace the creation of **the earth and the heavens**, as well as **every plant** and of **every herb**. In this case the meaning of this *yôm* may be “an undefined period of time not less, than three calendar days”, because plants and herbs were created in the third day(Gen.1,13).

If the second variant of translation is used, the creation of herbs and plants are not connected with the *yôm*, which can be easily understood in this case as normal

calendar day<sup>2</sup>. The first variant is preferred by Protestant creationists, despite it is associated with a problem, which they have to resolve in this case. These two interpretations obviously logically rule out each other in sense.

Our hypothetical neophyte, who can read not only Hebrew, will try to exit this dilemma by appealing to the authoritative to him text of Septuagint (because quotes from Hebrew Bible and Septuagint are included in the text of New Testament). In the Septuagint he will find the first interpretation of the two mentioned above.

But in this case the problem arises associated with meaning of ([in the day]= ביום - *beyôm*) in the Gen.2,4-5. Since the word *yôm* in this situation denotes a time period longer than one calendar day, then in the Ch.1 the same way of understanding can also be applied to the *yôms* of it, according to the *Scripture by Scripture*.

Thus, in which sense the word *yôm* is used in Gen.2,4-5? There are two answers to this question. The first one: *beyôm*( ביום – “in the day”) is a Hebrew idiom for ‘when’(Numbers 7,10; 7,84)[2, Ch.2]. But can this meaning of *beyôm* be unequivocally applied to the Gen.2,4-5? Quite close before these verses - in Gen.2,2, this word combination ביום was used with literal meaning “in the day”, and was used for the indication of the seventh day of creation week. **And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day ( ביום) from all his work which he had made.**

Thus, the meaning of the *beyôm* in Gen.2,4-5 remains enigmatic, and the possibility of its usage in literal way also remains. If this last variant is true, then the meaning of the word *yôm* in this place of the Bible can correspond to the period of time greater (may be considerably greater) than “twenty-four hours” – calendar day.

Our neophyte returns to the Ch.1 (with taking this in view) and can very easily derive the conclusion that, according to the principle *Scripture by Scripture*, the word *yôm* in this chapter probably can also signify something greater than “twenty-four hours” – calendar day.

Trying to solve the problem further our neophyte turns himself to the Septuagint once again and finds there the translation of Gen.2,4-5, in which the word ἡμέρα (“day”) embraces the time period much greater than one calendar day. If so, the principle *Scripture by Scripture* permits to transfer this meaning of the word ἡμέρα to the Gen.1, and this ἡμέρα is used there in the same places as Hebrew *yôms*... When Septuagint is used, everything turns out quite simple.

Certainly, despite all stated above, in accordance with *Solo Scriptura* our neophyte can stay at his first perusal of Gen.1, i.e. continue to consider 6 days of creation of Gen.1 as calendar days, but from the point of view of the *Solo Scriptura* method one may as well not stay at this.

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<sup>2</sup>These [are] births of the heavens and of the earth in their being prepared, in the day of Jehovah God's making earth and heavens; and no shrub of the field is yet in the earth, and no herb of the field yet sprouteth, for Jehovah God hath not rained upon the earth, and a man there is not to serve the ground ( Young's Literal Translation).

Thus, our neophyte, who tries to substantiate by himself the Creation Paradigm, will come to the conclusion that in each 6 places words “day” of Gen.1 can have at least two meanings according to the *Solo Scriptura*: calendar day or some period of time greater than 24 hours. Hence,  $2^6 = 64$  variants of hypothetic Creation Paradigms could be constructed on the basis of this method, in so doing, the duration of days of creation can be equal to 24 hours or to indefinitely longer periods<sup>3</sup>.

## 2.The problem of creation

Our neophyte feels himself lost in conjectures how the creation week should be imagined on the base of the Scripture and *Solo Scriptura*... But the problem of construction of MPCP is not restricted by foregoing troubles. One can examine yet another aspect.

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<sup>3</sup>Our hypothetic Protestant neophyte, as we agreed, is not acquainted with authoritative opinions of Protestant creationist theologians in relation to this topic. Therefore it is necessary to mention here about the most widespread reasonings of Protestant theologians in favor that days of Gen.1 are ordinary days [2].

Protestant creationist theologians attempt to find the arguments in favor for these days are calendar days in the context of Gen.1.

Firstly, the fact that words “evening” and “morning” are mentioned with *yôms* in Gen.1 is the basis of the first one. According to them, the words “evening” and “morning” are used together with *yôm* in the Scripture outside Genesis 1 38 times and always in these cases *yôm* has his calendar sense. Also “evening” or “morning” are used separately with *yôm* 23 times - “each with ‘day’ and it always means an ordinary day”. But as we have noted above, it is not fully evident, whether these evenings and mornings of Gen.1 did *make up* days of creation, and whether they were connected with them by sense at all.

Secondly, they say, that in all cases when the word “day” is used in the Scripture outside Gen.1 with a numeral – it is always (410 times) used in the sense of an ordinary day. For people who piously believe in *Scripture by Scripture* this argument can seem to be strong. But does this principle always lead to a definite truth? Is every word in the Bible always used in a single meaning – evidently no. In the next part we will show an example of an unusual application of a word in the Bible, which has in very many other passages of the Bible its habitual meaning.

At last, the text of Decalogue serves for the third argument for ordinary character of days of Gen.1. **Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day [is] the sabbath of the LORD thy God: [in it] thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that [is] within thy gates: 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 (Exod.20,8-11).** Some argued that God created the world in six calendar days with a purpose to establish our week with Sabbath in its end. But the text of Decalogue does not contain any information about the duration of creation days. As we reasoned above, their duration can be supposed according to *Solo Scriptura* to be greater than 24 hours and indefinite. We must add that the usage of the word “day” in the text of one of commandments in two different ways is quite permissible, from the point of view of *Scripture by Scripture*, since different usage of this word is possible even in one verse of the Bible: **And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day (Gen.1,5).**

Thus, our neophyte re-reads again Ch.1 of Genesis, and there appears a doubt in his mind concerning meanings of Hebrew words **בָּרָא**-*bara* and **עָשָׂה**-*assa*, which are used in this text for designation of “create” and “make”, as we can see in the widespread translations of the Bible.

Our neophyte arms himself with a computer program for search of words in the Hebrew Bible and finds out that the case is somewhat different and not so unequivocal as it could seem at the first glance.

In the texts of the Bible, which speak about God’s actions, three variants can be meant. These are: *direct actions of God* (e.g. Acts 2,32), situations in which *God permits* some events (e.g. Gen.45,7-8), giving sanction to natural processes as well as to free being’s actions. Sometimes the God’s actions are understood as complex combinations of the first and the second ones (e.g. Gen.45,8).

Let us look at the mentioned examples: **This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses** (Acts 2,32). (The direct action of God). **And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now [it was] not you [that] sent me hither, but God.** (Gen. 45,7-8). These are the words of St.Joseph, said to his brothers.(God’s permission). The example of the third case: **And he (God) hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt** (Gen. 45,7-8).

In order to determine which variant one deals with in the particular case, sometimes the context is sufficient - situational or general theological, contained in other parts of the Bible. But in other cases such context is absent. Thus, everywhere we meet in the text of the Bible the words about God’s actions, we every time come across with the possibility of triple interpretation and inadequate treatments should be rejected in every case for the precise comprehension.

In particular this is applicable to the words **עָשָׂה**(*assa*- created, made, produced etc.) and **בָּרָא**(*bara* – created). In Gen.1-2 these two verbs are used for designation of acts of Devine creation.

Our main question is how to understand the meaning of this words **בָּרָא** and **עָשָׂה** in the Gen. 1. Has God created by Himself or merely permitted the events?

The context of the first two chapters of Genesis does not allow to say unambiguously in which meaning these words are used here.

At least in one place of the Bible the verb **עָשָׂה**(*assa*) is evidently used in the sense of God’s *permission*, but not of His active action. **Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done (עָשָׂה) [it]?**(Amos. 3:6). The text of Septuagint like the verb **עָשָׂה** also indicates to the active Divine action. But general theological reasons and other passages of the Bible show that the literal interpretation of **עָשָׂה** here is evidently inadmissible (Deuter.32,4; Matthew 5,48 and many other places in the Bible). (The explosions in Boston were obviously produced not by God, but by Chechen terrorists).

At the first glance, the words of others books of the Bible tell just in favor of active creative work of God, described in the first two chapters of Genesis and expressed by **עָשָׂה**. E.g. :**I have made(עָשָׂה) the earth, the man and the beast**

that [are] upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me (Gerem.27,5). Similar places –Isa.44,24; Isa.45,12; Gerem.10,12; Gerem.32,17; Gerem.51,15. Nevertheless, on the other hand, every God’s permission implies that He actively holds all things in being and therefore is named as **יְהוָה** (Amos. 5,16). Therefore one cannot exclude that the indication towards the creation by the God’s force, in Gen.1 points out however to the situations, when He has only permitted the events.

The verb **בָּרָא** (*bara*) is used in the text of Scripture 46 times. In 44 cases it is used in it’s ordinary narrow sense (“created”), in one case it is used in the meaning similar to the wider meaning of the verb **עָשָׂה** (*assa*). **And the company shall stone them with stones, and dispatch **בָּרָא** (*bara*) them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire**(Ezek. 23,47). In one place, similarly to what we have seen in connection with *assa*, this verb *bara* is used with meaning of *permission*. **I form the light, and create darkness:I make peace, and create (**בָּרָא**(*bara*))evil: I the LORD do(**עָשָׂה**– *assa* (second example of permission)) all these [things]**(Isa.45,7).

If we transfer the ordinary meaning of the word *bara* (“created”), with which it seems to be used in 45 situations (44 mentioned +Isa.45,7)to the first case (Ezek. 23,47) we will obtain nonsense. If we apply the active sense of 45 situations (44 mentioned + Ezek. 23,47) of usage of the word *bara* to the second case (Isa.45,7) we will obtain blasphemy. If we apply the newly discovered sense of *bara*(“created or permitted”) to Ezek. 23,47 we obtain nonsense again.

Here we see an example of how the application of *Scripture by Scripture* in an attempt to transfer the general sense of a word in the Bible to the obscure cases leads to nonsense and blasphemy.

Our neophyte in this situation draws an obvious conclusion that *Solo Scriptura* can not give him a definite answer about whether God was creating or simply permitting natural origins of everything described in Gen.1.

The word *bara* is present in Gen.1 5 times; the word *assa* - 7 times, in the context related to the creation - 5 times. And each time it is not clear whether the creation or the permission took place.

Thus, one has 10 positions in which God’s creation as well as God’s permission were possibly meant. However, Gen.1,26-27 speaks 4 times about the origin of man (once *assa* and 3 times *bara*), so these 4 positions one may count as one. So one has the possibility of the presence of  $2^7=128$  probable variants of interpretation and accordingly the same number of probable Creation Paradigms...

### 3.From where the Creation Paradigm has come?

Our poor neophyte likely grips his hands on his head. *Solo Scriptura* merely with the help of his results allows him to assume the possibility of  $2^7 \times 2^6=8192$  different Creation Paradigms<sup>4</sup>! Nevertheless the Paradigm held by creationists is

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<sup>4</sup>Since the 5th day of creation in case of its 24 hours duration unlikely combines with the possibility of spontaneous origin of birds, fishes etc.(Gen.1,21), and the 6th day in the similar

single. So it is not founded on the Bible? We have to pity and to reassure our poor neophyte. MPCP are really founded on the Bible, but not on the Bible understood by means of *Solo Scriptura*, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, in the way as it was traditionally understood by St.Fathers of Orthodoxy from the earliest times, from the first centuries of Christianity [3],[4],[5]. And here there are no questions about possible variants; the truth is single.

Why then the Protestant creationists hold just the MPCP? We can answer this question only hypothetically. If the Protestant creationists strictly hold the definite MPCP, mentioned above, then it is reasonable to suppose, that some tradition, which they strictly follow, underlies this adherence.

It is very plausible that the history of appearance of MPCP in their views is the following. The founder of Reformation, M.Luther was adhering all of MPCP [6]. His views were of great authority for the Protestantism during the whole of its history.

But the question is: why M.Luther did adhere just these MPCP?

It is known, that the concept fully corresponding to MPCP was completely predominating in the views of the Catholic Church in XVI century (particularly in its education system)[7]. And it was founded in particular on the doctrine of St.Fathers of so called “undivided” Church (before the Great Schism of XI-th century)[7] – i.e. on the doctrine of St.Fathers of Orthodoxy[5]. The Catholic Church of XVI century in matters of creation held the Orthodox point of view.

M.Luther has strived to move away from the life of the Church everything which had no substantiation in the Bible. The MPCP were very well known to him (he had the doctoral degree in Catholic theology) and they were appraised by him as not getting out the frames of the Scripture. If the more thorough analysis of texts of Scripture related to the creation with application of *Scripture by Scripture* were made by him, he very probably could have doubts about unambiguousness of MPCP (as it was felt by our neophyte), but at that time, in the XVI century the creation problems were not the object of sharp discussions.

As a result M.Luther fully apprehended the Catholic doctrine of creation contemporary to him, i.e. the doctrine of St.Fathers of the “undivided” Church, i.e. the doctrine of St.Tradition of Orthodoxy! His followers and pupils (Protestants) seemed to be oriented on to his views and have paid too little attention to the ambiguities in the interpretations of Bible texts, related to the creation, arising when *Solo Scriptura* was used (the causes there of are quite not clear).

Seemingly MPCP and other points of Orthodox doctrine of creation have got to the system of views of modern Protestant creationists just by this way, for whom M.Luther’s views remain to be of great authority.

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situation - with the possibility of spontaneous origin of ground animals and man(Gen.1,25-27), the general number of possible Creation Paradigms can be reduced to 3840.

As a result a paradoxical situation occurred: Protestants who deny St. Tradition in principle, in this topic turned out to be its supporters and defenders, and they gathered a mass of scientific data corresponding to the St.Tradition, not at all to their method of interpretation of the Bible, named *Solo Scriptura*<sup>5</sup>.

Why Protestant creationists persist in that MPCP are founded on the Bible and *Solo Scriptura* until now, though such a method does not allow to ground MPCP with definiteness – this is by now the question to them, not to us...

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<sup>5</sup> The director of the Catholic *Kolbe Center for the Study of Creation* Hue Owen entirely agreed with our conclusions [8].