

it is hardly likely that in the last three days the word indicates a precise length. It would seem quite evident that the word in itself does not tell us how long a period is meant here. All that we can say with certainty is that it represents a definite period or stage in the work of God, which might, for all we know, be as short as a 24-hour day, or as long as many millions of years. Many important facts about the way in which God created the universe can be learned from Genesis 1, but the length of time involved is not included among them.

Every time that I present this material in my classes someone raises the question: Can we not be sure that this is a 24-hour period because reference to evening and morning is made in connection with each of the days? (Thus Genesis 1:5b in the Hebrew reads: "And it became evening and it became morning, one day.") In answer I ~~ask~~ ^{ask} another question: Is it possible that the words evening and morning here are used not in a literal, but in a figurative sense?

The so-called spiritualization of prophecy is a very pernicious tendency. If we make everything in a section of the Old Testament symbolic and figurative, it generally ceases to be a witness to anything. I have constantly stressed this in my classes. A few years ago I found that the result of my stressing this was to lead some students to go to the opposite extreme and to conclude that I thought that every word in the Scripture should be interpreted literally. Such a conclusion would, of course, be quite absurd. The Bible, like all other literature, contains figures of speech. When Jesus called Herod a fox (Luke 13:32), He did not mean that he was a four-footed beast. "We are the sheep of His pasture" (Psalm 95:7) does not mean that we supply wool or bleat like