



## THE "DAYS" OF GENESIS 1 ...

★ To understand the meaning of "day" in Genesis 1, we need to determine how the Hebrew word for "day," *yom*, is used in the context of Scripture. Consider the following:

- A typical concordance will illustrate that *yom* can have a range of meanings: a period of light as contrasted to night, a 24-hour period, time, a specific point of time, or a year.
- A classic, well-respected Hebrew-English lexicon<sup>8</sup> (a dictionary) has seven headings and many subheadings for the meaning of *yom*—but it defines the creation days of Genesis 1 as ordinary days under the heading "day as defined by evening and morning."
- A number and the phrase "evening and morning" are used with each of the six days of creation (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31).
- Outside Genesis 1, *yom* is used with a number 359 times, and each time it means an ordinary day. Why would Genesis 1 be the exception?
- Outside Genesis 1, *yom* is used with the word "evening" or "morning" 23 times. "Evening" and "morning" appear in association, but without *yom*, 38 times. All 61 times the text refers to an ordinary day. Why would Genesis 1 be the exception?
- In Genesis 1:5, *yom* occurs in context with the word "night." Outside of Genesis 1, "night" is used with *yom* 53 times, and each time it means an ordinary day. Why would Genesis 1 be the exception? Even the usage of the word "light" with *yom* in this passage determines the meaning as ordinary day.
- The plural of *yom*, which does not appear in Genesis 1, can be used to communicate a longer time period, such as "in those days." Adding a number here would be nonsensical. Clearly, in Exodus 20:11, where a number is used with "days," it unambiguously refers to six earth-rotation days.

- (Exodus 20:11 ESV) For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
- (Exodus 31:17 ESV) It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.