

Richard M. Davidson, PhD
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA

THE GENESIS ACCOUNT OF ORIGINS

INTRODUCTION

Scholars have increasingly recognized that Genesis 1 through 3 is set apart from the rest of the Bible, constituting a kind of prologue or introduction.¹ These opening chapters of Scripture are now widely regarded as providing the paradigm for the rest of the Bible. John Rankin summarizes the growing conviction among biblical scholars: “Whether one is evangelical or liberal, it is clear that Genesis 1–3 is the interpretive foundation of all Scripture.”²

The most prominent theme displayed in Genesis 1 through 3 is that of creation, which involves various issues of origins.³ Here in the

1. This chapter is updated and revised from the author’s article “The Biblical Account of Origins,” *JATS* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 4–43. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publisher. Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations in this chapter are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. The initial draft was first given as a paper (International Faith and Science Conference, Glacier View Ranch Retreat and Conference Center, Ward, Colo., August 25, 2002).

2. John Rankin, “Power and Gender at the Divinity School,” in *Finding God at Harvard: Spiritual Journeys of Christian Thinkers*, ed. Kelly Monroe (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), 203. For citations of other scholars who recognize Genesis 1–3 as foundational to the rest of Scripture, see Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 3, 4, 15, 16.

3. For discussion of how this theme fits into the multifaceted metanarrative of Scripture set forth in Genesis 1 to 3, see Richard M. Davidson, “Back to the Beginning: Genesis 1–3

opening chapters of Genesis, we find the foundational statement of Scripture regarding creation. The basic elements in the Genesis account⁴ of origins are encapsulated in the opening verse of the Bible, Genesis 1:1:

| | | |
|---|--|----------------------|
| 1 | “In the beginning” (<i>bĕrē’šīt</i>) | —the when of origins |
| 2 | “God” (<i>’ēlōhīm</i>) | —the Who of origins |
| 3 | “created” (<i>bārā’</i>) | —the how of origins |
| 4 | “the heavens and the earth” (<i>’ēt haššāmayim wĕ’ēt hā’āreṣ</i>) | —the what of origins |

In this chapter, we will take up each of these elements in turn, with special emphasis upon the when⁵ as well as aspects in the

and the Theological Center of Scripture,” in *Christ, Salvation, and the Eschaton: Essays in Honor of Hans K. LaRondelle*, ed. Daniel Heinz, Jiří Moskala, and Peter M. van Bemmelen (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Old Testament Publications, 2009), 5–29.

4. I do not quibble over whether Genesis chapters 1 and 2 are described as a single account or two separate accounts, but I am persuaded that Genesis 1 and 2 were composed under divine inspiration by a single human writer (whom I take to be Moses). Evidence presented by seminal scholarly studies leads me personally to the conclusion that Genesis 1 and 2 do not represent separate and disparate sources, as argued by proponents of the documentary hypothesis. See especially Jacques B. Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story: Its Literary Structure* (AUSDDS 5; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1978); and William H. Shea, “The Unity of the Creation Account,” *Origins* 5 (1978): 9–38; id., “Literary Structural Parallels between Genesis 1 and 2,” *Origins* 16.2 (1989): 49–68. Instead of comprising multiple sources, I find that Genesis 1 and 2 provide a unified dual perspective on creation—and the God of creation. Genesis 1:1–2:4a gives the picture of an all-powerful, transcendent God (*’ēlōhīm*) and a cosmic view of creation. In Genesis 2:4b–25, God is further presented as the personal, caring, covenant God (*YHWH ’ēlōhīm*), and creation is described in terms of humankind and their intimate, personal needs. See below for discussion of alleged contradictions between Genesis 1 and 2. For evidence supporting the unity and Mosaic authorship of Genesis 1 and 2 (as well as the rest of Genesis and the Pentateuch), see, for example, Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 89–189 (and esp. 113–26); Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch: Eight Lectures* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961); id., *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. Israel Abrahams, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Magnes/Hebrew University, 1961), 7–20, 84–100; Duane Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1991); Gerhard F. Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation Today* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1985); Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn, *Before Abraham Was: The Unity of Genesis 1–11* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1985); John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992), 1–79; Herbert M. Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 51–78; and Gerald A. Klingbeil, “Historical Criticism,” *DOTP*, 401–20.

5. This emphasis upon the when of creation is in stark contrast with that of, for example, Raymond F. Cottrell, “Inspiration and Authority of the Bible in Relation to Phenomena of the Natural World,” in *Creation Reconsidered: Scientific, Biblical, and Theological Perspectives*, ed. James L. Hayward (Roseville, Calif.: Association of Adventist Forums, 2000), 203, who claims that “the Bible writers have much to say about who created the universe [which according to Cottrell refers exclusively to ‘the atmospheric heavens, or sky, and the earth’s surface,’ p. 197], some to say about why he created it, little to say about how he created it,

other elements that are relevant to various current issues in the scholarly debate over origins.⁶

THE WHEN: “IN THE BEGINNING”

In discussing the when of creation, a number of questions arise for which an answer may be sought in the biblical text. Does Genesis 1 and 2 describe an absolute or relative beginning? Does the Genesis account intend to present a literal, historical portrayal of origins, or is some kind of nonliteral interpretation implied in the text? Does the biblical text of Genesis 1 describe a single creation event (encompassed within the creation week) or a two-stage creation, with a prior creation described in Genesis 1:1 and some kind of interval implied between the description of Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:3ff.? Does the Genesis account of origins present a recent beginning (at least for the events described in Genesis 1:3ff., including life on earth), or does it allow for long ages since creation week? Let us look at each of these questions in turn.

AN ABSOLUTE OR RELATIVE BEGINNING?

The answer to the question of an absolute versus a relative beginning in Genesis 1 depends, to a large degree, upon the translation of the first verse of the Bible: Genesis 1:1. There are two major translations—as an independent clause or as a dependent clause.⁷

and nothing to say about when he created it.” Likewise, this is contra Frederick E. J. Harder, “Theological Dimensions of the Doctrine of Creation,” in *Creation Reconsidered: Scientific, Biblical, and Theological Perspectives*, ed. James L. Hayward (Roseville, Calif.: Association of Adventist Forums, 2000), 282: “Indeed, there is total lack of concern in the biblical record with the question of ‘when?’ [of creation].”

6. Hence, the sections of this chapter dealing with other aspects of Genesis 1 and 2, which do not have as direct a bearing upon current issues of origins, are not argued as fully as other sections. Although as far as possible, footnote references point to sources, which provide evidence supporting the positions taken and critiquing alternative positions.

7. Building upon these two basic options of independent and dependent clauses, there are actually at least five different types of translations of Genesis 1:1–3 (two built on the independent clause and three upon the dependent clause) and at least seven different interpretative options (three based on dependent clause translations and four based upon independent clause translations). For a succinct summary of these translation and interpretation options (except for that of Robert Holmstedt, described below), see Jiří Moskala, “Interpretation of *bērē’šīt* in the Context of Genesis 1:1–3,” *AUSS* 49 (2011): 33–35. There are actually some thirty different creation theories, which are summarized and critiqued in Thomas P. Arnold, *Two-Stage Biblical Creation: Uniting Biblical Insights Uncovered by Ten Notable Creation Theories*, vol. 1 (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Thomas Arnold Publishing, 2007), 31–510. In the pages that follow, I deal with all the main theories that claim to build upon the biblical text of Genesis 1 and 2.

Independent Clause

The standard translation of Genesis 1:1 until recently has been as an independent clause: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”⁸ According to the traditional interpretation (dominant until the triumph of historical criticism in the nineteenth century), this verse is taken as a main clause describing the first act of creation, with verse 2 depicting the condition of the earth after its initial creation phase and verses 3 through 31 describing the subsequent creative work of God. Such an interpretation implies that God existed before matter, and thus, He created planet Earth “out of nothing” (*creatio ex nihilo*) at an absolute beginning for creation.⁹

8. Examples of modern English versions with this translation include: ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, NJB, NKJV, NLT, REB, and RSV.

9. There are a few interpreters who affirm an independent clause as the best translation of Genesis 1:1 and, yet, still find no absolute beginning of creation in this chapter. These interpreters take Genesis 1:1 as an independent clause but also as a summary statement or formal title, which is then elaborated in the rest of the chapter. See, for example, Brian Bull and Fritz Guy, *God, Sky and Land: Genesis 1 as the Ancient Hebrews Heard It* (Roseville, Calif.: Adventist Forum, 2011), 139 (they translated *bērēʾšīt* as “to begin with”); Cottrell, “Inspiration and Authority,” 198, 99; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 117; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster, 1972), 49; and Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3: Part III: The Initial Chaos Theory and the Precreation Chaos Theory,” *BSac* 132 (1975): 225–28. According to these interpreters, Genesis 1:2 constitutes a circumstantial clause connected with verse 3: “Now the earth was unformed and unfilled. . . . And God said, ‘Let there be light.’” The actual creating only starts with verse 3. The strongest defense of Genesis 1:1 as title or summary of what follows in Genesis 1:3ff. is by Waltke, “Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3: Part III.” Waltke argues this view is based partially upon the alleged structural parallels between Genesis 1:1–3 and Genesis 2:4–7 and the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* creation story; but as we note below, the differences outweigh the similarities. His centerpiece of evidence is that the “heavens and earth” of Genesis 1:1 and elsewhere describe an organized cosmos and never a disorderly chaos (as he interprets Gen. 1:2), and thus, Genesis 1:2 cannot depict what was created in Genesis 1:1. But this argument founders when it is recognized that the words of Genesis 1:2 do not describe disorderly chaos but the earth in a state of “unproductiveness and emptiness” (as in Isa. 34:11 and Jer. 4:23). See the discussion in David Toshio Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Study* (JSOTSup 83; Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1989), esp. 41–43 and 155, 56. John Sailhamer offers additional objections to the interpretation of verse 1 as a summary and title statement. First, “the conjunction ‘and’ at the beginning of the second verse makes it highly unlikely that 1:1 is a title.” John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account* (Sisters, Ore: Multnomah, 1996), 103. Sailhamer elaborates: “The conjunction ‘and’ (Hebrew: *waw*) at the beginning of 1:2 shows 1:2–2:4 is coordinated with 1:1, rather than appositional. If the first verse were intended as a summary of the rest of the chapter, it would be appositional and hence would not be followed by the conjunction” (ibid., 253). See also C. F. Keil, *The Pentateuch*, Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976), 46: “That this verse [Gen. 1:1] is not a heading merely, is evident from the fact that the following account of the course of the creation commences with *waw* [in Hebrew in the original] (*and*), which connects the different acts of creation with the fact expressed in ver. 1, as the primary foundation upon which they rest.” Again, Sailhamer points out that “Genesis 1 has a summary title at its conclusion, making it unlikely it would have another at its beginning. As would be expected, the closing summary comes in

Dependent Clause

In recent decades, some modern versions have translated Genesis 1:1 as a dependent clause, following the parallels in ANE creation stories. Genesis 1:1 is taken as a temporal clause, either subordinate to verse 2 (“In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void”)¹⁰, or subordinate to verse 3 with verse 2 as a parenthesis describing the state of the earth when God began to create (“When God began to create heaven and earth—the earth being unformed and void . . . —God said”).¹¹ In either case, only verse 3 describes the actual commencement of the work of creation; when God began to create (Gen. 1:1), the earth already existed in the state described in Genesis 1:2. For either subordinate clause alternative, Genesis 1 does not address the absolute creation of planet Earth, and thus, the end result is the same: it gives a relative beginning to creation, allows for the possibility of pre-existing matter before God’s creative work described in Genesis 1, and thus, allows for God and matter to be seen as coeternal principles.¹²

the form of a statement: “Thus the heavens and earth were finished, and all their hosts’ (Genesis 2:1). Such a clear summary statement at the close of the narrative suggests that 1:1 has a purpose other than serving as a title or summary. We would not expect two summaries for one chapter.” Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 103. He recognizes the existence of a prologue at the beginning, but this is not the same as a summary. If Genesis 1 begins with only a title or summary, then verse 2 contradicts verse 1. God creates the earth (v. 1), but the earth pre-exists creation (v. 2). This interpretation simply cannot explain the reference to the existence of the earth already in verse 2 in the use of the term “earth.” Perhaps the weightiest evidence against taking Genesis 1:1 as a summary or title is that it would then not match the contents that follow, which it was supposed to summarize. If, as we will argue below, the phrase “heavens and earth” in Genesis 1:1 is a merism (a statement of opposites to indicate totality), referring to the entirety of what God has created (i.e., the universe), then it could not be a summary or title of what follows, since Genesis 1:3ff. describe the creation (“forming and filling”) of the three habitats of this planet (earth, sea, and sky), not the entire universe. For further evidence against taking Genesis 1:1 as a summary statement, see also Mark F. Rooker, “Genesis 1:1–3: Creation or Re-Creation? Part 2,” *BSac* 149.596 (1992): 414–16; and Gerhard F. Hasel, “Recent Translations of Genesis 1:1: A Critical Look,” *BT* 22.4 (1971): 165. I find the arguments of Sailhamer, Rooker, Hasel, and others persuasive, and therefore, I conclude that Genesis 1:1 is not simply a summary or title of the whole chapter.

10. NRSV; cf. NEB. Medieval Jewish commentator Rashi (d. 1105) advocated this position.

11. NJPS; cf. NAB. See also E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, AB 1 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 3, 8–13. Medieval Jewish commentator Ibn Ezra (d. 1167) was an early advocate of this position. A recent variation on the dependent clause view is espoused by Robert D. Holmstedt, “The Restrictive Syntax of Genesis 1:1,” *VT* 58 (2008): 56–67. Holmstedt postulates that the word *bērēšît* is in construct, not with the verb *bārā’* itself, but with the unmarked restrictive relative clause that follows. Thus, he translates Genesis 1:1: “In the initial period that/in which God created the heavens and the earth.” (65). This translation implies that Genesis 1:1 does not speak of an absolute beginning (56) and, further, “that there were potentially multiple *rēšît* periods or stages to God’s creative work” (66).

12. One could arguably accept the subordinate clause interpretation and maintain that Genesis 1:1 simply does not deal with the creation of “prime matter” of the universe or of the

Crucial implications of these two main translations—as independent and dependent clauses—may be summarized as follows:

| Independent Clause | Dependent Clause |
|---|--|
| a. <i>Creatio ex nihilo</i> (creation out of nothing) is explicitly affirmed. | a. No <i>creatio ex nihilo</i> is mentioned. |
| b. God exists before matter. | b. Matter is already in existence when God began to create, allowing for God and matter to be seen as coeternal. |
| c. God created the heavens, earth, darkness, the deep, and water. | c. The heavens, earth, darkness, the deep, and water already existed at the beginning of God’s creative activity described in Genesis 1. |
| d. There is an absolute beginning of time for the cosmos. | d. No absolute beginning is indicated. |

Victor Hamilton, in his commentary on Genesis, summarizes the importance of the proper translation of the opening verse of Scripture:

The issue between these two options—“In the beginning when” and “In the beginning”—is not esoteric quibbling or an exercise in micrometry. The larger concern is this: Does Gen 1:1 teach an absolute beginning of creation as a direct act of God? Or does it affirm the existence of matter before the creation of the heavens and earth? To put the question differently, does Gen 1:1 suggest that in the beginning there was one—God; or does it suggest that in the beginning there were two—God and preexistent chaos?¹³

unformed, unfilled condition of earth and its immediate surrounding celestial spheres, in which case, one could still consider *creatio ex nihilo* as a biblical teaching (from other biblical passages) but acknowledge that such is not taught in Genesis 1. However, if one accepts the independent clause interpretation of Genesis 1:1 and accepts that this verse describes actual new material creation and is not just a title or summary of what follows later in the chapter—which points I find strongly supported by the textual evidence, as argued elsewhere in this chapter—then one is led to conclude that this verse explicitly affirms *creatio ex nihilo*.

13. Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 105. We might note in passing another view, which takes Genesis 1:1 as a dependent clause “when . . .” but still affirms an absolute beginning for creation. In this view, the various terms in Genesis 1:2—*tohû*, or “unformed,” and *bōhû*, or “unfilled,” and the terms for “darkness” and “deep”—all meant by the narrator to imply “nothingness.” So verse 1 is a summary, verse 2 says that initially there was “nothingness,” and verse 3 describes the beginning of the creative process. See especially Doukhan, *Genesis Creation Story*, 63–73. The question to be asked about this view is whether the terms for “darkness” and “deep” imply only “nothingness” or actually describe the earth in its unformed-unfilled state covered with water. Later usage of these terms, in particular the word for “deep,” clearly describes actual waters and not “nothingness” (Gen. 7:11; 8:2; Ps. 104:6). Against the suggestion that all the words in Genesis 1:2 simply imply “nothingness,”

The modern¹⁴ impetus for shifting from the independent to the dependent clause translation of Genesis 1:1 is largely based on ANE parallel creation stories, which start with a dependent (temporal) clause.¹⁵ But ANE parallels cannot be the norm for interpreting Scripture. Furthermore, it is now widely recognized that Genesis 1:1–3 does not constitute a close parallel with the ANE creation stories. For example, no ancient Mesopotamian creation stories start with a word like “beginning.” Already with Hermann Gunkel, the father of form criticism, we have the affirmation: “The cosmogonies

it should be observed that verses 3ff. do not describe the creation of water but assume its prior existence. The word *tēhôm*, or “deep,” combined with *tohû* and *bōhû* together (as in Jer. 4:34) do not seem to refer to nothingness but rather to the earth in an unformed-unfilled state. In Genesis 1:2, this unformed-unfilled earth is covered by water. It should be noted that Doukhan’s recent thinking seems to be moving away from the nothingness position. This is apparent not only from personal conversations, but also, for example, from his more recent article: Jacques B. Doukhan, “The Genesis Creation Story: Text, Issues, and Truth,” *Origins* 55 (2004): 19. This article is referring to the “primeval water” of Genesis 1:2 as polemic against the ANE creation myths: “This does not mean, however, that the author [of Genesis 1] is thinking of symbolic water. He may well be referring to real water, an element that might have been created before this creation week.”

14. The dependent clause view is not totally new to modern times. As noted above, it was proposed already in medieval times by the Jewish scholars Rashi and Ibn Ezra. However, John Sailhamer, “Genesis,” *EBC* 2 (1990): 21, 22, shows that these scholars did not reject the traditional reading (independent clause) on grammatical grounds, but they rejected it because of their pre-understanding of cosmology in which the heavens were created from fire and water, and thus, the water of Genesis 1:2 must have been in existence prior to verse 1. Hence, verse 1 could not refer to an absolute beginning and an independent clause reading was impossible. As with the biblical scholars of this last century, the worldview of these medieval interpreters became the external norm for interpreting the biblical text. For further discussion of how these and other medieval Jewish interpreters operated within the current “perceived state of reality” informed by Greek philosophy, see Malcom E. Schrader, “Creation: Something from Something, Something from Nothing, or Something from Hardly Anything?” *JBQ* 36.3 (2008): 187–95.

15. This dependence is recognized, for example, by William White, “*rē’šît*,” *TWOT* 2:826. The Assyrian creation story is named after its first two words, which begin the dependent clause, *Enuma Elish*, or “when on high.” The *Atrahasis Epic* also begins with a dependent clause (the beginning of the *Eridu Genesis* is probably the same but is not extant.) These are the three main ancient Mesopotamian versions of the creation story discovered by archaeologists: the Sumerian *Eridu Genesis* (dating originally from c. 1700–1600 BC), the Old Babylonian *Atrahasis Epic* (dating from c. 1800–1600 BC), and the Assyrian *Enuma Elish* (the copy from Ashurbanipal’s library dates from the seventh century BC, but the composition of the story probably dates from the early second millennium BC). The discovery of these ANE creation accounts paralleling the biblical account led most critical biblical scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to posit that the biblical account of origins in Genesis is borrowed from the older Mesopotamian stories, and thus, many concluded that the biblical account, like its ANE counterparts, is to be read as a mythological text, not a literal, historical, or factual portrayal of origins. For translations of these stories, see Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation [Enuma Elish]* 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963, 1951); W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atrahasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: University Press, 1969); Thorkild Jacobsen, “The Eridu Genesis,” *JBL* 100.4 (1981): 513–29. Ancient Egyptian creation texts also consistently start with a dependent temporal clause “when”; for discussion, see Doukhan, “The Genesis Creation Story,” 20, 21.

of other people contain no word which would come close to the first word of the Bible.”¹⁶ As will be discussed below, numerous other differences between the biblical and extra-biblical ANE creation stories reveal that, far from borrowing from the ANE, the biblical writer was engaged in a strong polemic against the ANE views of origins.

Biblical evidence for the dependent clause interpretation is likewise equivocal. The alleged parallel with the introductory dependent clause of the Genesis 2 creation account is not as strong as claimed, since Genesis 2:4b–7, like the ancient Mesopotamian stories, has no word like “beginning” that Genesis 1:1 has, and there are other major differences in terminology and syntax, as well as literary and theological function.¹⁷ The expression *bĕrē’šît* elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (all in Jeremiah; cf. 26:1; 27:1; 28:1; 49:34, 35) is indeed in the construct, but as discussed below, these construct occurrences are consistently followed by an absolute noun (“in the beginning of *the reign*”), as expected in construct chains, whereas Genesis 1:1 is unique in being followed by a finite verb, which is not the normal syntax for a construct form. Furthermore, as noted below, the use of *mĕrē’šît*, or “from the beginning,” without the article, but clearly in the absolute in Isaiah 46:10, shows that *bĕrē’šît* does not need the article to be in the absolute.

Evidence for the Independent Clause

Evidence for the traditional view—*independent clause*—is weighty and persuasive.¹⁸

16. Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Albert Wolters, 7th ed., HKAT (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 101. The ANE stories from Mesopotamia consistently start out (literally) with the words “in the day,” which may be seen to parallel the introduction to the second creation account, Genesis 2:4b but not Genesis 1:1. While Egyptian creation texts also start with a dependent temporal clause, “when . . .,” it is true that some ancient Egyptian creation texts, in describing the making of heaven and earth, do employ a technical term meaning “first time” or “beginning” (Egyptian *sp tpy*) and resembling the term *rē’šît*, or “beginning,” found in Genesis 1:1. However, Doukhan, “The Genesis Creation Story,” 21, has shown that the biblical parallels with Egyptian terminology are used polemically against Egyptian cosmogony and do not represent a borrowing of Egyptian conceptions of origins.

17. See Hasel, “Recent Translations of Gen 1:1,” 161, for a listing and discussion of these crucial differences.

18. The majority of recent scholarship rejects the dependent clause reading in favor of the independent clause. For detailed support of the independent clause translation, see especially Walter Eichrodt, “In the Beginning,” in *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), 1–10; Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 106–8; Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Meaning of Genesis 1:1,” *Ministry* (January 1976): 21–24; id., “Recent Translations of Gen 1:1,”

Grammar and syntax: Although the Hebrew word *bĕrēʾšīt*, or “in the beginning,” does not have the article and, thus, could theoretically be translated as a construct “in the beginning of,” the standard way for expressing the construct or genitive relationship in Hebrew is for the word in construct to be followed by an absolute noun. In harmony with this normal function of Hebrew grammar, elsewhere in Scripture when the word *bĕrēʾšīt* occurs as a construct in a dependent clause, it is always followed by an absolute noun (with which it is in construct), not a finite verb, as in Genesis 1:1.¹⁹ Furthermore, in Hebrew grammar there is regularly no article with temporal words such as “beginning” when linked with a preposition.²⁰ Thus, “in the beginning” is the natural reading of this phrase. Isaiah 46:10 provides a precise parallel to Genesis 1:1: the term *mĕrēʾšīt*, or “from the beginning,” without the article, is clearly in the absolute and not the construct.²¹ Grammatically, therefore, the natural reading of Genesis 1:1 is as an independent clause: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Syntactically, Umberto Cassuto points out that if Genesis 1:1 were a dependent clause, the Hebrew of Genesis 1:2 would have normally either omitted the verb altogether²² or placed the verb before the subject.²³ The syntactical construction that begins Genesis 1:2, with *waw* (“and”) plus a noun (“earth”), indicates “that v. 2 begins a

154–68; Johnson T. K. Lim, “Explication of an Exegetical Enigma in Genesis 1:1–3,” *AJT* 16, no. 2 (2002): 301–14; Moskala, “Interpretation of *bĕrēʾšīt*,” 33–48; Hershel Shanks, “How the Bible Begins,” *Judaism* 21.1 (1972): 51–8; Waltke, “Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3: Part III,” 222–28; and Edward J. Young, “The Relation of the First Verse of Genesis One to Verses Two and Three,” in *Studies in Genesis One* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1976), 1–14.

19. Jer. 26:1; 27:1; 28:1; 49:34—all part of the clause “in the beginning of the reign of X.”

20. See, for example, Isa. 40:21; 41:4; 46:10; Prov. 8:23; cf. Gen. 3:22; 6:3, 4; Mic. 5:1 (5:2 ET); Hab. 1:12.

21. Some object to this parallel because the Isaiah passage is in poetry—a genre that does not consistently use definite articles for stylistic reasons. But, as we have noted above, there are examples in prose where temporal expressions do not use the article, and further, as Sailhamer points out, the “insistence that examples be cited from prose texts alone, though methodologically sound, is too demanding in light of the frequent occurrence of the article in biblical poetry” (Sailhamer, “Genesis,” *EBC* 2:21–22).

22. This is true if verse 2 constitutes a parenthesis, as suggested by Ibn Ezra and his modern counterparts. A parallel situation is found in 1 Samuel 3:2–4. See Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part One: From Adam to Noah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1978), 19, 20.

23. This applies if verse 2 constitutes the main clause of the sentence, as suggested by Rashi and his modern counterparts. Parallels for this construction are found in Jer. 26:1; 27:1; 28:1; and Hos. 1:2. See Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 19.

new subject” and, “therefore, that the first verse is an independent sentence” (independent clause).²⁴

Short stylistic structure of Genesis 1: The traditional translation as an independent clause conforms to the pattern of brief, terse sentences throughout the first chapter of the Bible. As Hershel Shanks remarks, “Why adopt a translation that has been aptly described as a *verzweifelt geschmacklose* [hopelessly tasteless] construction, one which destroys a sublime opening to the world’s greatest book?”²⁵

Theological thrust: The account of creation throughout Genesis 1 emphasizes the absolute transcendence of God over matter. This chapter describes One Who is above and beyond His creation, implying *creatio ex nihilo* and, thus, the independent clause.²⁶

Ancient versions and other ancient witnesses: All the ancient versions (e.g., LXX, Vulgate, Symmachus, Aquila, Theodotion, Targum Onkelos, the Samaritan transliteration, Syriac, Vulgate) render Genesis 1:1 as an independent clause. This reading is followed by ancient witnesses such as Josephus Theophilus of Antioch (ca. AD 180), and Pseudo-Justin (AD 220–300).²⁷

Parallel with John 1:1–3: The prologue to the Gospel of John is clearly alluding to Genesis 1:1 and commences with the same phrase that begins Genesis 1:1 in the LXX. In John 1:1, as in the

24. *Ibid.*, 20. So Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1987), 15: “And’ + noun (= earth) indicates that v 2 is a disjunctive clause.”

25. Shanks, “How the Bible Begins,” 58.

26. See Brevard S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, SBT 27 (London: SCM, 1960), 39: “This verse can be interpreted grammatically in two different ways While there is a choice grammatically the theology of *P* [Genesis 1] excludes the latter possibility [i.e., that Gen 1:1 is a dependent clause] . . . we have seen the effort of the Priestly writer to emphasize the absolute transcendence of God over his material.” Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster, 1972), 48, argues similarly: “Syntactically perhaps both translations are possible, but not theologically God, in the freedom of his will, creatively established for ‘heaven and earth,’ i.e., for absolutely everything, a beginning of its subsequent existence.” Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, NAC 1A (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 139, rightly points out that the theological argument cannot be the sole basis for decision (contra Childs and von Rad, whose views on the unique theology of the *P* source presuppose acceptance of the documentary hypothesis), and yet at the same time, “there is no room in our author’s cosmology for co-eternal matter with God when we consider the theology of the creation account in its totality.”

27. For exact sources of these latter references, see, for example, Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 107; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 138; and Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, *Creation out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2004), 43–45. Some have also pointed to the Massorettes’ use of the disjunctive *tifcha* accent placed under the word *bērēšit* as support for the absolute interpretation. Doukhan has observed that even if the grammatical form of *bērēšit* is construct, it has the syntactical power of an absolute (cited in Moskala, “Interpretation of *bērēšit*,” 41).

LXX, this phrase “in the beginning [*en archē*]” has no article but is unmistakably part of an independent clause: “In the beginning was the Word . . .”

In summary, I find the weight of evidence within Scripture decisive in pointing toward the traditional translation of Genesis 1:1 as an independent clause: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Here in the opening verse of the Bible, we have a distancing from the cosmology of the ANE, an emphasis upon an absolute beginning and implication of *creatio ex nihilo*, in contrast to the ANE cyclical view of reality and the concept that matter is eternal.²⁸

A LITERAL OR NONLITERAL BEGINNING?

The question of literal or nonliteral interpretation of the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 is of major importance both for biblical theology and for contemporary concerns about origins. Many, including the critical scholar Hermann Gunkel at the turn of the twentieth century, have recognized the intertextual linkage in Scripture between the opening chapters of the Old Testament and the closing chapters of the New Testament.²⁹ In the overall canonical flow of Scripture, because of the inextricable connection between protology (Gen. 1–3) and eschatology (Rev. 20–22), without a literal beginning—protology—there is no literal end—eschatology. Furthermore, it may be argued that the doctrines of humanity, sin, salvation, judgment, Sabbath, and so on, presented already in the opening chapters of Genesis, all hinge upon a literal interpretation of origins.³⁰

28. With regard to the ANE view of matter as eternal, see, for example, Steven W. Boyd, “The Genre of Genesis 1:1–2:3: What Means This Text?” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, Ariz.: Master Books, 2008), 188: “The ANE gods are born from eternal matter.” Additional reasons for accepting the implication of *creatio ex nihilo* in Genesis 1:1 revolve around significant features of the verb *bārā* and are discussed in our section dealing with the how of creation. For a helpful summary of evidence and scholarly testimony, see especially Copan and Craig, *Creation out of Nothing*, 29–60.

29. Hermann Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895). For recent explorations of this linkage, see Michael G. Hasel, “The Relationship between Protology and Eschatology,” in *The Cosmic Battle for Planet Earth*, ed. Ron du Preez and Jiří Moskala (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 2003), 17–32; Bruce Norman, “The Restoration of the Primordial World of Genesis 1–3 in Revelation 21–22,” *JATS* 8 (1997): 161–69; and Michael W. Pahl, *The Beginning and the End: Rereading Genesis’s Stories and Revelation’s Visions* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2011).

30. The interconnection may be summarized thus: If humans are only a product of time and chance from the same evolutionary tree as animals, then they are no more morally accountable than the animals; if not morally accountable, then there is no sin; if no sin, then

Nonliteral Interpretations

Scholars who hold a nonliteral interpretation of Genesis approach the issue in different ways.³¹ Some see Genesis 1 as mythology,³² based upon ANE parallels as already noted. Building upon ANE parallels, John Walton has recently advanced the theory of cosmic temple inauguration.³³ According to Walton's interpretation, the Genesis account describes "a seven-day inauguration of the cosmic temple, setting up its functions for the benefit of humanity, with God dwelling in relationship with his creatures."³⁴ Even though Walton regards the days of creation as six literal days, for him this creation is only functional creation—in other words, assigning functions to the "cosmic temple." He argues that, like the ANE creation accounts, Genesis 1 says nothing about material creation, and no passage in Scripture is concerned about the age of the earth. Thus, we are free to accept theistic evolution as the means for God's material creation of the cosmos.

Among evangelicals, a still popular interpretation of Genesis 1 is the literary framework hypothesis, which maintains that "the Bible's use of the seven-day week in its narration of the creation is a literary (theological) framework and is not intended to indicate the chronology or duration of the acts of creation."³⁵ Other evangelical scholars

no need of a Savior. Furthermore, if there was no literal seven-day creation, then no literal Sabbath. While this may be simplistically stated here, it does point toward a profound interrelationship between origins and the other biblical doctrines. For further discussion of these interrelationships, see John T. Baldwin, "Progressive Creationism and Biblical Revelation: Some Theological Implications," *JATS* 3.1 (1992): 105–119; Norman R. Gulley, "What Happens to Biblical Truth if the SDA Church Accepts Theistic Evolution?" *JATS* 15, no. 2 (2004): 40–58; Michael G. Hasel, "In the Beginning," *Adventist Review* (October 25, 2001): 24–27; Randall W. Younker, "Consequences of Moving Away from a Recent Six-Day Creation," *JATS* 15, no. 2 (2004): 59–70; and E. Edward Zinke, "Theistic Evolution: Implications for the Role of Creation in Seventh-day Adventist Theology," in *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary*, ed. John T. Baldwin (Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 2000), 159–71.

31. There is not space for a detailed discussion of the lines of argumentation supporting the various views in the following list, although I attempt to provide a succinct presentation of most views in the footnotes. Here I concentrate on the essential presupposition that underlies all of these views, i.e., that Genesis 1–2 is not to be regarded as a literal historical account of material creation.

32. See, for example, Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*; Childs, *Myth and Reality*, 31–50; and Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2005), 50.

33. This view has recently been advanced by John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2009); cf. id., *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

34. Walton, *Lost World of Genesis One*, 163.

35. Mark E. Ross, "The Framework Hypothesis: An Interpretation of Genesis 1:1–2:3," in *Did God Create in Six Days?* ed. Joseph A. Pipa Jr. and David W. Hall (Taylors, S.C.: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1999), 113. This view was initially set forth in 1924 by Arie Noordzij,

contend that Genesis 1 and 2 is essentially theology and, thus, not to be taken literally.³⁶ A related view argues that the Genesis creation texts are essentially liturgy or worship. So, for example, Fritz Guy states, “Genesis 1:1–2:3 is first of all an expression of praise, an act of worship, necessarily formulated in the language and conceptions of its time and place. Once the text is deeply experienced as worship, its transposition into a literal narrative, conveying scientifically relevant

professor at the University of Utrecht, taken up by N. H. Ridderbos, *Is There a Conflict Between Genesis 1 and Natural Science?* trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1957) and popularized especially by Meredith G. Kline, “Because It Had Not Rained,” *WTJ* 20.2 (1958): 146–57, and in his commentary on Genesis in *The New Bible Commentary*, ed. Dr. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1970). For additional examples of the literary framework interpretation, see Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1984), 49–59; Lee Irons and Meredith G. Kline, “The Framework View,” in *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*, ed. David G. Hagopian (Mission Viejo, Calif.: Crux Press, 2001), 217–56; W. Robert Godfrey, *God’s Pattern for Creation: A Covenantal Reading of Genesis 1* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003), 52, 3; D. F. Payne, *Genesis One Reconsidered* (London: Tynedale, 1964), passim; and Bruce K. Waltke, “The Literary Genre of Genesis, Chapter One,” *Crux* 27, no. 4 (1991): 2–10; id., *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2001), 73–78. For these scholars, the “artistic, literary representation of creation” serves a theological purpose, i.e., “to fortify God’s covenant with creation” (*ibid.*, 78).

36. See, for example, Conrad Hyers, *The Meaning of Creation: Genesis and Modern Science* (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox, 1984); Bruce R. Reichenbach, “Genesis 1 as a Theological-Political Narrative of Kingdom Establishment,” *BBR* 13.1 (2003): 47–69; and Davis Young, *Creation and the Flood: An Alternative to Flood Geology and Theistic Evolution* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1974), 86–89. From an Adventist perspective, Ivan Blazen regards Genesis 1 as theology and not scientific: “What we have in Genesis 1 is theological affirmation rather than scientific delineation.” Ivan T. Blazen, “Theological Concerns of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” in *Understanding Genesis: Contemporary Adventist Perspectives*, ed. Brian Bull, Fritz Guy, and Ervin Taylor (Riverside, Calif.: Adventist Today Foundation, 2006), 72. Likewise, Fritz Guy maintains that “What Genesis gives us is not scientific cosmology but profound theology (even if it utilizes ancient perceptions of the world).” Fritz Guy, “The Purpose and Function of Scripture: Preface to a Theology of Creation,” in *Understanding Genesis: Contemporary Adventist Perspectives*, ed. Brian Bull, Fritz Guy, and Ervin Taylor (Riverside, Calif.: Adventist Today Foundation, 2006), 94. Frederick E. J. Harder, “Literary Structure of Genesis 1:1–2:3: An Overview,” in *Creation Reconsidered: Scientific, Biblical, and Theological Perspectives*, ed. James L. Hayward (Roseville, Calif.: Association of Adventist Forums, 2000), 243, asks, “May theological truth be transmitted within historical or scientific contexts that are not literally factual?” and the rest of his article implies that the answer is indeed yes. Harder’s views demonstrate a strong Kantian cleavage between faith and empirical knowledge: Harder also wonders in print (without committing himself) whether the Genesis creation account is poetry or myth and, therefore, not literal (*ibid.*, 242, 43). Larry G. Herr, “Genesis One in Historical-Critical Perspective,” *Spectrum* 13, no. 2 (December 1982): 51–62, makes a similar distinction between the cosmology (the ANE view of the universe) and the cosmogony (the theology of the writer) and suggests that “the chapter simply uses the common ancient Near Eastern cosmology in expressing what it takes to be the *theological* (or cosmogonic) truth” (61). The abiding cosmogonic or theological statement is that “God created the world miraculously in an ordered fashion,” but the erroneous details of the “common cosmology of antiquity” used by the author may be discarded (58). “Genesis 1 is theological in intent and scientists need not attempt to harmonize the ancient cosmology used by Biblical authors with the cosmology of modern science” (59).

information, seems not merely a misunderstanding but a distortion, trivialization, and abuse of the text.”³⁷

Another popular interpretation involves day-age symbolism.³⁸ There are several day-age theories. First, a common evangelical symbolic view, sometimes called the broad concordist theory, is that the seven days represent seven long ages, thus allowing for theistic evolution (also called evolutionary creation, although sometimes evolution is denied in favor of multiple step-by-step divine creation acts throughout the long ages).³⁹ Another theory, the progressive-creationist view, regards the six days as literal days, each of which open a new creative period of indeterminate length.⁴⁰ Still, another theory, espoused particularly by Gerald Schroeder, attempts to harmonize the six twenty-four-hour days of creation week with the billions of years for the universe, as estimated by modern physicists, by positing the idea of “cosmic time.”⁴¹ The effect of all these day-age views is to have the six days represent much longer periods of time for creation.

37. Guy, “Purpose and Function of Scripture,” 93. See Bull and Guy, *God, Sky and Land*, 143, “in the first place, Genesis 1 is worship. It is a hymn praising the Creator for the mind-boggling reality that the author saw all around him, and saw with his own eyes.” Terence E. Fretheim, “Were the Days of Creation Twenty-Four Hours Long? YES,” in *The Genesis Debate: Persistent Questions about Creation and the Flood*, ed. Ronald F. Youngblood (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1990), 28, suggests that “It is probable that the material in this chapter [Genesis 1] had its origins in a liturgical celebration of the creation.” See Blazen, “Theological Concerns,” 71: “It [Genesis 1] is primarily a religious statement that, with its doxological feel, rhythmic cadences, and deliberate repetitions, has its home in Israel’s worship (compare Psalm 29, 33, and 104) rather than in any scientific arena.”

38. See, for example, Dalton D. Baldwin, “Creation and Time: A Biblical Reflection,” in *Understanding Genesis: Contemporary Adventist Perspectives*, ed. Brian Bull, Fritz Guy, and Ervin Taylor (Riverside, Calif.: Adventist Today Foundation, 2006), 36, 41–42, who speaks of “symbolic envisioning” in Genesis 1.

39. See, for example, Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1967), 54–58; Hugh Ross and Gleason L. Archer, “The Day-Age View,” in *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*, ed. David G. Hagopian (Mission Viejo, Calif.: Crux, 2001), 123–63; and Vern S. Poythress, *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, ed. J. P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1999), 92.

40. See, for example, Robert C. Newman and Herman J. Eckelmann Jr., *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1977), 64, 65; see Poythress, *Three Views*, 104.

41. See Gerald L. Schroeder, *Genesis and the Big Bang: The Discovery of Harmony between Modern Science and the Bible* (New York: Bantam, 1990), summarized in id., “The Age of the Universe,” last modified January 29, 2005, accessed October 14, 2011, www.aish.com/ci/sam/48951136.html; cf. id., *The Science of God: The Convergence of Scientific and Biblical Wisdom* (New York: Free Press, 1997); and id., *God According to God: A Scientist Discovers We’ve Been Wrong about God All Along* (New York: Harper One, 2009). Philip Johnson summarizes (without approval) Schroeder’s hypothesis regarding the days of Genesis 1: “The Bible speaks of time from the viewpoint of the universe as a whole, which Schroeder interprets to mean at the moment of ‘quark confinement,’ when stable matter formed from energy early in the first second of the big bang. Relativity theory teaches

Several evangelical scholars speak of the Genesis account of creation week in terms of “analogical” or “anthropomorphic” days: “The days are God’s workdays, their length is neither specified nor important, and not everything in the account needs to be taken as historically sequential.”⁴² Still, other scholars see the Genesis creation account(s) as poetry,⁴³ metaphor or parable,⁴⁴ or vision.⁴⁵

Common to all these nonliteral views is the assumption that the Genesis account of origins is not a literal, straightforward historical account of material creation.

Evidence for a Literal Interpretation

Is there evidence within the text of Genesis itself and elsewhere in Scripture that would indicate whether or not the creation account was intended to be taken as literal? Indeed, there are several lines of evidence.

that time passes much more slowly in conditions of great gravitational pressure than it does on earth. Using these familiar principles, Schroeder calculates that a period of six days under the conditions of quark confinement, when the universe was approximately a million million times smaller and hotter than it is today, is equal to fifteen billion years of earth time. Genesis and modern physics are reconciled.” Phillip E. Johnson, “What Would Newton Do?” *First Things* 87 (November 1998): 25–31, www.arn.org/ftissues/ft9811/articles/johnson.html. In effect, the days of creation for Schroeder were six divine days contrasted with earth days.

42. C. John Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2006), 124. See *ibid.*, 125: “To speak this way [about God as Workman going through His workweek] is to speak analogically about God’s activity; that is, we understand what he did by analogy with what we do; and in turn, that analogy provides guidance for man in the proper way to carry out his own work and rest. The analogy cautions us against applying strict literalism to the passage.” Cf. *id.*, “How Old is the Earth? Anthropomorphic Days in Genesis 1:1–2:3,” *Presbyterian* 20 (1994): 109–30; and *id.*, “Reading Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Act of Communication: Discourse Analysis and Literal Interpretation,” in *Did God Create in Six Days?* ed. Joseph A. Pipa Jr. and David W. Hall (Oak Ridge, Tenn.: Covenant Foundation, 1999), 131–50. See also Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 53–56, who, although taking the Hebrew word *yôm* (“day”) as a literal twenty-four-hour day, further explains that this day should not be understood as “a chronological account of how many hours God invested in his creating project but as an analogy of God’s creative activity.” For a critique of this view, see especially, James B. Jordan, *Creation in Six Days: A Defense of the Traditional Reading of Genesis One* (Moscow, Id.: Canon, 1999), 97–111.

43. For example, Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox, 1982), 26–28; Bill T. Arnold, *Encountering the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1998), 23.

44. See, for example, John C. L. Gibson, *Genesis*, vol. 1, Daily Study Bible (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1981), 55, 56.

45. According to this “visionary” view, the six days are “days of revelation,” a sequence of days on which God instructed the writer of Genesis about creation and not the six days of creation itself. See P. J. Wiseman, *Creation Revealed in Six Days: The Evidence of Scripture Confirmed by Archaeology* (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1948), 33, 34; and Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis*, 192–94. This view was popularized in the nineteenth century by the Scottish geologist Hugh Miller (1802–1856).

Literary genre: The literary genre of Genesis 1 through 11 points to the literal and historical nature of the creation account. Kenneth Mathews shows how the suggestion of a parable genre—an illustration drawn from everyday experience—does not fit the contents of Genesis 1 nor does the vision genre, since it does not contain the typical preamble and other elements that accompany biblical visions.⁴⁶ Steven Boyd has conducted a statistical analysis of Genesis 1:1–2:3, showing that this material is not intended to be read as poetry or extended poetic metaphor but constitutes the narrative genre of “a literal historical account.”⁴⁷ Likewise, Daniel Bediako has applied text-linguistic principles of discourse typology to Genesis 1:1–2:3, demonstrating from its formal characteristics that this passage “constitutes a historical narrative text type.”⁴⁸

Likewise, a penetrating critique of the framework hypothesis conducted by Robert McCabe, has concluded that “the framework

46. Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 109. Todd Beall points out that the word “parable” or its equivalent does not appear in Genesis 1 through 11 and, likewise, no parabolic formula such as “a certain man.” He concludes: “To suggest that Genesis 1–11 is simply a parable or story and is not concerned with things or history has no support whatsoever in the text of these chapters.” Todd S. Beall, “Contemporary Hermeneutical Approaches to Genesis 1–11,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, Ariz.: Master, 2008), 146. Gerhard F. Hasel, “The ‘Days’ of Creation in Genesis 1: Literal ‘Days’ or Figurative ‘Periods/EPOCHS’ of Time?” *Origins* 21, no. 1 (1994): 48, also shows how the visionary view rests largely on mistranslating the word *ʾāśā*, or “made,” in Exodus 20:11 as “showed,” a meaning which lies outside the semantic range of this Hebrew word. Garrett’s suggested parallel with the six-plus-one structures of the book of Revelation is far from convincing (Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis*, 192–94), since the apocalyptic genre of Revelation is filled with explicit symbolic language and imagery, which are totally absent in Genesis 1.

47. Boyd, “The Genre of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” 163–92; see id., “Statistical Determination of Genre in Biblical Hebrew: Evidence for an Historical Reading of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” in *Radioisotopes and the Age of the Earth: Results of a Young-Earth Creationist Research Initiative*, ed. Larry Vardiman et al. (El Cajon, Calif.: Institute for Christian Research and Chino Valley, Ariz.: Creation Research Society, 2005), 631–734.

48. Daniel Bediako, *Genesis 1:1–2:3: A Textlinguistic Analysis* (Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag, 2011), 251–66, n257). Such conclusions are predicated upon text-linguistic studies of Scripture, which reveal that “different text types have distinct features of foregrounding and backgrounding as well as other features” (254, 55). Bediako shows that Genesis 1:1–2:3 exhibits text-linguistic characteristics of historical narrative and not of another text type. These characteristics include: (1) verb forms of the passage, which correspond to typical narrative band structure; (2) a lack of projection (future orientation) in the text, which is typical of historical narrative; (3) events presented in a chrono-sequential order (using *wayqtl* verbal forms), a feature characteristic of narrative but not poetry; (4) sequentiality, further suggested by the reiteration of the subject *ʾelōhīm* and action orientation; (5) the presence of the three communicative perspectives of quotation, action report, and author’s comments, which are characteristic of narrative and not poetry; and (6) the percentage of prose particles (such as consonantal articles, relatives, and the sign of the accusative) in the passage (24.4 percent), which falls well within the category of prose (15 percent or more) and not poetry (5 percent or less).

view poses more exegetical and theological difficulties than it solves and that the traditional, literal reading provides the most consistent interpretation of the exegetical details associated with the context of the early chapters of Genesis."⁴⁹ Terence Fretheim, although himself suggesting a liturgical origin for what he considers the pre-canonical Genesis 1 material, acknowledges that the narrative, as it now stands in Genesis 1, has been freed from these cultic and liturgical settings and, in its present context, is to be interpreted literally as describing the temporal order of creation.⁵⁰

Walter Kaiser has surveyed and found wanting the evidence for placing these opening chapters of Genesis in the mythological literary genre, and he shows how the best genre designation is "historical

49. Robert V. McCabe, "A Critique of the Framework Interpretation of the Creation Week," in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, Ariz.: Master Books, 2008), 211–49. McCabe addresses the three main arguments advanced in favor of the framework interpretation: (1) the creation story is arranged topically rather than chronologically, utilizing a literary structure, which betrays its semi-poetic style and shows that it is to be taken figuratively and not literally; (2) ordinary and not extraordinary providence governed the creation account (as allegedly presupposed by passages such as Genesis 2:5); and (3) the seventh day has an unending nature, indicating that the six days of the creation week are not normal days. McCabe argues that the repeated use of the *waw* consecutive (the sequential narrative verb form) and other chronological features (e.g., the use of "day" with the numerical adjective) throughout Genesis 1 and 2 reveals that it is a historical narrative sequence and not just a topical semi-poetic style that is to be taken figuratively. He analyzes Genesis 2:5 contextually and demonstrates that this verse does not indicate ordinary providence governing creation but simply shows what the state of creation actually was at the start of day six of creation. Finally, McCabe provides six reasons why the absence of the evening-morning formula on day seven does not imply a figurative interpretation of the days of creation week. I find the following most significant: (a) the formula is not used for the seventh day, because God had finished working on that day, and thus, none of the four aspects of the repeated formula are found with the seventh day. "But because day 7 is a historic literal day, it is numbered like the previous six days" (242); (b) the evening-morning formula marks a transition from concluding day to the following day, and there is no following day of creation week after the seventh day; (c) comparison with the fourth commandment in Exodus 20:8–11 rules out an open-ended interpretation of the seventh day; and (d) God's blessing and sanctifying the seventh day implies a specific day. For further critique of this view, see Jordan, *Creation in Six Days*, 29–69.

50. Fretheim, "Days of Creation," 28. I do not concur with Fretheim's suggestion that the origins of Genesis 1 are in the cultus. Fretheim is apparently unduly influenced by von Rad and others who saw the creation accounts as subservient to salvation history. The scholarly paradigm has recently shifted toward recognizing creation theology in the Hebrew Bible as important in its own right and not to be subsumed under salvation history. See, for example, William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr., "Preface," in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner*, ed. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), xi: "The title of this volume, *God Who Creates*, identifies a tectonic shift in emphasis that has taken place in the theological study of the Bible over the past several decades. . . . In a nutshell, this change marks nothing short of a paradigm shift from a once exclusive stress upon the mighty interventions of God in history to God's formative and sustaining ways in creation."

narrative prose.”⁵¹ More recently, John Sailhamer has come to the same conclusion, pointing out the major differences between the style of the ANE myths and the biblical creation narratives of Genesis 1–2, prominent among which is that the ANE myths were all written in poetry, while the biblical creation stories are not poetry but prose narratives.⁵² Furthermore, Sailhamer argues that the narratives of Genesis 1 and 2 lack any clues that they are to be taken as some kind of nonliteral, symbolic or metaphorical, meta-historical narrative, as some recent evangelicals have maintained.⁵³ Sailhamer acknowledges that the creation narratives are different from later biblical narratives, but this is because of their subject matter (creation) and not their lit-

51. See Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “The Literary Form of Genesis 1–11,” in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1970), 48–65. See Beall, “Contemporary Hermeneutical Approaches to Genesis 1–11,” 154, who argues for “a normal narrative form” of Genesis 1, based especially on the fact that “the standard form in Hebrew for consecutive, sequential narrative prose is the *waw* consecutive imperfect” and the further fact that “Genesis 1 contains 50 *waw* consecutive imperfect forms in its 31 verses.” For a helpful discussion of the mythological view of Genesis 1 through 11, see especially Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 56–59.

52. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 227–34. Sailhamer points out that unlike the ANE myths of creation, which (as far as we have record) were all in poetry, Genesis 1 and 2 are written as narrative. “The fact that they [the biblical stories of creation] are written in narrative form rather than poetry shows that at least their author understood them as real accounts of God’s work in creation. Judging from what we know about ancient creation myths, the biblical texts give every impression of having been written and understood as realistic depictions of actual events. It simply will not do to say that the Genesis creation accounts are merely ancient myths and thus should not be taken literally. If we are to respect the form in which we now have them—as narrative—we must reckon with the fact they are intended to be read as literal accounts of God’s activity in creation. . . . As we now have them, Genesis 1 and 2 have all the appearances of a literal, historical account of creation” (230, 31). This is not to deny that there are isolated verses of poetry in Genesis 1 and 2, including what some have seen as a poetic summary of God’s creation of humanity (Gen. 1:27), and the record of the clearly poetic, ecstatic utterance of the first man after the creation of woman (Gen. 2:23).

53. *Ibid.*, 234–45. According to the meta-history view, advanced by some contemporary evangelical scholars, Genesis 1 and 2 do describe creation as a historical fact, but the “account we have of it, however, is cast in a realistic but nonliteral narrative” (237). Sailhamer points out how this view is not supported by the text itself. “A straightforward reading of Genesis 1 and 2 gives every impression that the events happened just as they are described. It is intended to be read both realistically and literally” (237). Sailhamer shows how this is in contrast to, for example, the story Nathan told David (1 Sam. 1:1–3), which has internal clues that the story should not be taken literally: the men and the town in the story are not specifically identified as they would be in an actual historical account (237, 38). Sailhamer also points out that the narrative form of Genesis 1 and 2 is the same as the form of the narrative texts in the remainder of the Pentateuch and the historical books. “The patterns and narrative structures that are so evident in Genesis 1 are found with equal frequency in the narratives which deal with Israel’s sojourn in Egypt and their wilderness wandering. They are, in fact, the same as those in the later biblical narratives dealing with the lives of David and Solomon and the kings of Israel and Judah. If we take those narratives as realistic and literal—which most evangelicals do—then there is little basis for not doing so in Genesis 1” (238).

erary form (narrative). He suggests that perhaps we should call Genesis 1 and 2 a “mega-history” to “describe literally and realistically aspects of our world known only to its Creator.”⁵⁴ As mega-history, “that first week was a real and literal week—one like we ourselves experience every seven days—but that first week was not like any other week. God did an extraordinary work in that week, causing its events to transcend by far anything which has occurred since.”⁵⁵

Literary structure: The literary structure of Genesis as a whole indicates the intended literal nature of the creation narratives. It is widely recognized that the whole book of Genesis is structured using the word “generations” (*tôlēdôt*) in connection with each section of the book (thirteen times). This is a word used in the setting of genealogies concerned with the accurate account of time and history. It means literally “begettings” or “bringings-forth” (from the verb *yālad*, meaning “to bring forth or beget”) and implies that Genesis is the history of beginnings. The use of *tôlēdôt* in Genesis 2:4 shows that the narrator intends the account of creation to be just as literal as the rest of the Genesis narratives.⁵⁶ As Mathews puts it:

The recurring formulaic *tôlēdôt* device shows that the composition was arranged to join the historical moorings of Israel with the beginnings of the cosmos. In this way the composition forms an Adam-Noah-Abraham continuum that loops the patriarchal promissory blessings with the God of cosmos and all human history. The text does not welcome a different reading for Genesis 1–11 as myth versus the patriarchal narratives.⁵⁷

Later in his commentary, Mathews insightfully points out how the *tôlēdôt* structuring of Genesis precludes taking the Genesis account as only theological and not historical: “If we interpret early Genesis as theological parable or story, we have a theology of creation that is grounded neither in history nor the cosmos. . . . The *tôlēdôt* structure of Genesis requires us to read chap. 1 as relating real events that are presupposed by later Israel. . . . If taken as theological story alone, the interpreter is at odds with the historical intentionality of Genesis.”⁵⁸

54. *Ibid.*, 239.

55. *Ibid.*, 244.

56. See Doukhan, *Genesis Creation Story*, 167–220, and Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 26–41, for a detailed discussion.

57. Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 41.

58. *Ibid.*, 110, 11.

For critical scholars who reject the historical reliability of all or most of Genesis, this literary evidence will only illuminate the intention of the final editor of Genesis, without any compelling force for their own belief system. But for those who claim to believe in the historicity of the patriarchal narratives, the *tôlêdôt* structure of Genesis, including its appearance six times within the first eleven chapters of Genesis, is a powerful, internal testimony within the book itself that the account of origins is to be accepted as literally historical like the rest of the book.

Specific temporal terms: Other internal evidence within Genesis that the creation account is to be taken literally, and not figuratively or as symbolic of seven long ages conforming to the evolutionary model—as suggested by some scholars—involves the use of specific temporal terms. The phrase “evening and morning,” appearing at the conclusion of each of the six days of creation, is used by the author to clearly define the nature of the days of creation as literal twenty-four-hour days.⁵⁹ The references to “evening” and “morning” together, outside of Genesis 1, invariably, without exception in the Old Testament (fifty-seven times total—nineteen times with *yôm*, or “day,” and thirty-eight without *yôm*) indicate a literal solar day. Again, the occurrences of *yôm*, or “day,” at the conclusion of each of the six days of creation in Genesis 1 are all connected with a numeric adjective (“one [first] day,” “second day,” “third day,” and so on), and a comparison with occurrences of the term elsewhere in Scripture reveals that such usage always refers to literal days.⁶⁰ Furthermore, references to the function

59. John Walton writes concerning the Hebrew word for “day” in Genesis 1: “We cannot be content to ask, ‘Can the word bear the meaning I would like it to have?’ We must instead try to determine what the author and audience would have understood from the usage in the context. With this latter issue before us, it is extremely difficult to conclude that anything other than a twenty-four-hour day was intended. It is not the text that causes people to think otherwise, only the demands of trying to harmonize with modern science.” John H. Walton, *Genesis*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2001), 81. For a summary of evidence that this phrase refers to a literal twenty-four-hour day, see, for example, David M. Fouts, “Selected Lexical and Grammatical Studies in Genesis 1,” *AUSS* 42.1 (2004): 86. Bull and Guy, *God, Sky and Land*, 151–55, argue that the reference to “evening” first and then “morning” implies a nonliteral interpretation, since, according to them, “For the Hebrews, the day began in the morning at least down to the time of the monarchy” (152). However, this argument fails, because there is solid evidence that throughout the biblical history, from the very beginning, the day was reckoned from sunset to sunset and did not begin in the morning. See H. R. Stroes, “Does the Day Begin in the Evening or Morning? Some Biblical Observations,” *VT* 16 (1966): 460–75; and J. Amanda McGuire, “Evening or Morning: When Does the Biblical Day Begin?” *AUSS* 46.2 (2008): 201–14.

60. For discussion of the meaning of *yôm* throughout Scripture and particularly in Genesis 1, see especially Fouts, “Selected Lexical and Grammatical Studies,” 79–90; and Hasel, “The ‘Days’ of Creation,” 5–38; *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary*, ed. John T. Baldwin (repr.;

of the sun and moon for signs, seasons, days, and years (Gen. 1:14) indicates literal time, not symbolic ages.

Biblical references outside of Genesis 1 and 2: Intertextual references to the creation account elsewhere in Scripture confirm that the biblical writers understood the six days of creation to be taken as six literal, historical, contiguous, creative, natural twenty-four-hour days.⁶¹ If the six days of creation week were to be taken as symbolic of long ages, as six visionary days of revelation, only as analogical days, or anything less than the six days of a literal week, then the reference to creation in the fourth commandment of Exodus 20:8–11, commemorating a literal Sabbath, would make no sense.⁶² The Sabbath commandment explicitly equates the six days

Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 2000), 40–68. In the 359 times outside of Genesis 1 where *yôm* appears in the Old Testament with a number (i.e., a numerical adjective), it always has a literal meaning. Similarly, when used with a numbered series (like in Gen. 1; Num. 7; 29), *yôm* always refers to a normal day. Three alleged exceptions (Hos. 6:2; Zech. 3:9; 14:7) turn out upon closer inspection not to be exceptions to this rule; in these prophetic sections, a literal day is applied in prophecy to a longer period of time (see the discussion in Henry M. Morris, *Studies in the Bible and Science* [Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1966], 36). See Andrew E. Steinmann, “אָדָם as an Ordinal Number and the Meaning of Genesis 1:5,” *JETS* 45 (2002): 577–84, who shows how “the use of אָדָם in Gen 1:5 and the following unique uses of the ordinal numbers on the other days demonstrates that the text itself indicates that these are regular solar days” (584). While supporting the conclusion that *yôm* in Genesis 1 refers to “regular solar days,” Steinmann also posits a reason why in Genesis 1:5 the cardinal number “one” is used rather than the ordinal “first”: “By using a most unusual grammatical construction, Genesis 1 is defining what a day is. . . . By omission of the article it must be read as ‘one day,’ thereby defining a day as something akin to a twenty-four hour solar period with light and darkness and transitions between day and night, even though there is no sun until the fourth day” (583). This is contra Bull and Guy, *God, Sky and Land*, 149–55, who claim that the use of the ordinal number in Genesis 1:5 points to a symbolical “archetypical Creation day” and, like the other days that follow in Genesis 1, refer to “days in the realm of the divine” and not regular “twenty-four-hour, consecutive, solar days” (149, 154).

61. Besides the references in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue and its parallel in Exodus 31:17, other Old Testament passages are dealt with in later chapters of this book (see, e.g., my discussion of Ps. 104). For New Testament passages, see, for example, Hebrews 4:3, 4 and the allusion to the fourth commandment in Revelation 14:7. For discussion of these New Testament passages, see especially Erhard H. Gallos, “*Katapausis and Sabbatismos* in Hebrews 4” (PhD diss., Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2011); Jon Paulien, “Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” *JATS* 9 (1998): 179–86; and John T. Baldwin, “Revelation 14:7: An Angel’s Worldview,” in *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary*, ed. John T. Baldwin (Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 2000), 19–39.

62. This is a major argument, not just of Seventh-day Adventists and other Saturday-sabbath keepers. See, for example, Henry M. Morris, *Biblical Cosmology and Modern Science* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1970), 59: “Thus, in Exodus 20:11, when the Scripture says that ‘in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is,’ there can be no doubt whatever that six literal days are meant. This passage also equates the week of God’s creative work with the week of man’s work, and is without force if the two are not of the same duration.”

Again, Fretheim, “Days of Creation,” 19, 20: “The references to the days of creation in Exodus 20:11 and 31:17 in connection with the Sabbath law make sense only if understood in

of humanity's work followed by the seventh-day Sabbath with the six days of God's creation work followed by the Sabbath. By equating humanity's six-day work week with God's six-day work week at creation and further equating the Sabbath to be kept by humankind each week with the first Sabbath after creation week blessed and sanctified, God, the divine Lawgiver, unequivocally interprets the first week as a literal week, consisting of seven consecutive, contiguous twenty-four-hour days.

As a broader intertextual evidence for the literal nature of the creation accounts, as well as the historicity of the other accounts of Genesis 1 through 11, it is important to point out that Jesus and *all* New Testament writers refer to Genesis 1 through 11 with the underlying assumption that it is literal, reliable history.⁶³ Every chapter of Genesis 1 through 11 is referred to somewhere in the New Testament, and Jesus Himself refers to Genesis 1 through 7.

In penetrating articles, Gerhard F. Hasel,⁶⁴ Terence Fretheim,⁶⁵ and James Stambaugh,⁶⁶ among others⁶⁷ set forth in detail various

terms of a normal seven-day week. It should be noted that the references to creation in Exodus are not used as an analogy—that is, your rest on the seventh day ought to be like God's rest in creation. It is, rather, stated in terms of the imitation of God or a divine precedent that is to be followed: God worked for six days and rested on the seventh, and therefore you should do the same. Unless there is an exactitude of reference, the argument of Exodus does not work" (emphasis in original).

63. See Matt. 19:4, 5; 23:35; 24:37–39; Mark 10:6–9; 13:19; Luke 1:70; 3:34–38; 11:50, 51; 17:26, 27; John 1:1–3, 10; 8:44; Acts 3:21; 4:25; 14:15; 17:24, 26; Rom. 1:20; 5:12, 14–19; 8:20–22; 16:20; 1 Cor. 6:16; 11:3, 7–9, 12; 15:21, 22, 38, 39, 45, 47; 2 Cor. 4:6; 11:3; Gal. 4:4, 26; Eph. 3:9; 5:30, 31; Col. 1:16; 3:10; 1 Tim. 2:13–15; Heb. 1:10; 2:7, 8; 4:3, 4, 10; 11:4, 5, 7; 12:24; James 3:9; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:4, 5; 3:4–6; 1 John 3:8, 12; Jude 6, 11, 14, 15; Rev. 2:7; 3:14; 4:11; 10:6; 12:1–4, 9, 13–17; 14:7; 17:5, 18; 20:2; 21:1, 4; 22:2, 3. For the identification of the person or event in Genesis 1 through 11 indicated by these passages, see Henry M. Morris, *The Remarkable Birth of Planet Earth* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany Fellowship, 1972), 99–101. See also Terry Mortenson, "Jesus' View of the Age of the Earth," in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, Ariz.: Master Books, 2008), 315–46; Ron Minton, "Apostolic Witness to Genesis Creation and the Flood," in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, Ariz.: Master Books, 2008), 347–71; and Beall, "Contemporary Hermeneutical Approaches to Genesis 1–11," 146–49.

64. Hasel, "The 'Days' of Creation in Genesis 1," 5–38; repr., 40–68.

65. Fretheim, "Days of Creation," 12–35.

66. James Stambaugh, "The Days of Creation: A Semantic Approach," *CEN Technical Journal* 5.1 (1991): 70–78.

67. See especially J. Ligon Duncan III and David W. Hall, "The 24-Hour View," in *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*, ed. David G. Hagopian (Mission Viejo, Calif.: Crux, 2001), 21–66; Robert V. McCabe, "A Defense of Literal Days in the Creation Week," *DBSJ* 5 (Fall 2000): 97–123; Joseph A. Pipa Jr., "From Chaos to Cosmos: A Critique of the Non-Literal Interpretations of Genesis 1:1–2:3," in *Did God Create in Six Days?* ed. Joseph A. Pipa Jr. and David W. Hall (Taylors, S.C.: Southern Presbyterian, 1999), 151–96; and Benjamin Shaw, "The Literal Day Interpretation," in *Did God Create in Six Days?* ed. Joseph A. Pipa

lines of evidence (including evidence not mentioned here for lack of space), based on comparative, literary, linguistic, intertextual, and other considerations, which lead me to the “inescapable conclusion” set forth by Hasel that the designation *yôm* in Genesis 1 means consistently a literal, natural day of approximately twenty-four-hours. “The author of Genesis 1 could not have produced more comprehensive and all-inclusive ways to express the idea of a literal ‘day’ than the one chosen.”⁶⁸ With Stambaugh, I conclude that according to the biblical evidence “God created in a series of six consecutive [approximately] twenty-four-hour days.”⁶⁹

While the nonliteral interpretations of biblical origins must be rejected in what they deny (namely, the literal, historical nature of the Genesis account), nevertheless many of them have an element of truth in what they affirm. Genesis 1 and 2 are concerned with mythology—not to affirm a mythological interpretation but as a polemic against ANE mythology.⁷⁰ Genesis 1:1–2:4a is structured in

Jr. and David W. Hall (Taylors, S.C.: Southern Presbyterian, 1999), 197–217. See also Walter M. Booth, “Days of Genesis 1: Literal or Nonliteral?” *JATS* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 101–20; and Trevor Craigen, “Can Deep Time Be Embedded in Genesis?” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, Ariz.: Master Books, 2008), 195–210.

68. Hasel, “The ‘Days’ of Creation in Genesis 1,” 30, 31, repr. 62. The remainder of Hasel’s concluding paragraph in this seminal article is worth citing in full: “There is complete lack of indicators from prepositions, qualifying expressions, construct phrases, semantic-syntactical connections, and so on, on the basis of which the designation ‘day’ in the creation week could be taken to be anything different than a regular 24-hour day. The combinations of the factors of articular usage, singular gender, semantic-syntactical constructions, time boundaries, and so on, corroborated by the divine promulgations in such Pentateuchal passages as Exodus 20:8–11 and Exodus 31:12–17, suggest uniquely and consistently that the creation ‘day’ is meant to be literal, sequential, and chronological in nature.”

69. Stambaugh, “Days of Creation,” 75.

70. See especially, Gerhard F. Hasel, “Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” *EvQ* 46 (1974): 81–102; id., “Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis 1 in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Parallels,” *AUSS* 10.1 (1972): 1–20; and the chapter in this volume by Gerhard F. Hasel and Michael G. Hasel, “The Unique Cosmology of Genesis 1 against Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian Parallels.” See Boyd, “Genre of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” 187–191; Copan and Craig, *Creation out of Nothing*, 30–36; Doukhan, *Genesis Creation Story*, 18–25; Conrad Hyers, *The Meaning of Creation: Genesis and Modern Science* (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox, 1984), 42–46; Gordon H. Johnston, “Genesis 1 and Ancient Egyptian Creation Myths,” *BSac* 165.658 (2008): 178–94; and John Stek, “What Says the Scripture?” in *Portraits of Creation*, ed. Howard J. van Till (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 229–31. Unfortunately, some of these scholars seem to conclude that a theological polemic denigrates the historical or scientific value of the text. In “Ancient Egyptian Creation Myths,” Johnston, for example, states that “Genesis 1 was originally composed not as a scientific treatise but as a theological polemic against the ancient Egyptian models of creation” (194). Though not explicitly stated, the implication seems to be that Genesis 1 has no value in addressing modern issues of origins. But as argued above, a theological polemic does not exclude an accurate depiction of the historical reality of creation. On the other hand, Walton, *Lost World of Genesis One*, 12–15, and throughout his book, downplays the aspect of biblical polemic and emphasizes the

a literary, symmetrical form.⁷¹ However, the synthetic parallelism involved in the sequence of the days in Genesis 1 is not a literary artifice created by the human writer but is explicitly described as part of the successive creative acts of God Himself, Who, as the Master Designer, created aesthetically (see the discussion below in section 4 focusing upon the how of creation). The divine artistry of creation within the structure of space and time does not negate the historicity of the creation narrative.

Genesis 1 and 2 do present a profound theology: doctrines of God, creation, humanity, Sabbath, and so on,⁷² but theology in Scripture is not opposed to history. To the contrary, biblical theology is always rooted in history. There is no criterion within the creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 that allows one to separate between cosmogony and cosmology, as some have claimed, in order to reject the details of a literal six-day creation while retaining the theological truth that the world depends upon God.⁷³ Likewise, there is profound symbolism as well as sanctuary or temple imagery in Genesis 1. For example, the language describing the Garden of Eden and the occupation of Adam and Eve clearly allude to the sanctuary imagery and the work of the priests and Levites (see Exod. 25–40).⁷⁴ Thus,

similarities between ANE and biblical cosmology to the extent that he (no doubt unwittingly) allows the ANE texts to be the external norm to interpret Scripture rather than allowing Scripture to be the final norm (*sola Scriptura*). Thus, he reads his understanding of ANE functional cosmology into the biblical text of Genesis 1, without recognizing that the biblical text (unlike the ANE) is interested in both functional and material creation. See further discussion below.

71. See Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 17; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 6, 7; and the discussion in section 4 for diagrams of the symmetrical matching of the days of creation. As the Master Artist, God created artistically, building symmetry into the very structure of the creation week.

72. See, for example, Laurence A. Turner, “A Theological Reading of Genesis 1,” in *In the Beginning: Science and Scripture Confirm Creation*, ed. Bryan W. Ball (Nampa, Id.: Pacific Press, 2012), 66–80. The profound theology of creation set forth in Genesis 1 and 2 is also explored by Guy, “Purpose and Function of Scripture,” 86–101, and Blazen, “Theological Concerns,” 70–85; unfortunately, these latter scholars fail to recognize that the theological truths of Genesis 1 and 2 are not opposed to, but actually build upon, the historical claims of the text affirming a literal six-day creation week.

73. For further affirmation of both theology and history in Genesis 1 and 2, see Jiří Moskala, “A Fresh Look at Two Genesis Creation Accounts: Contradictions?” *AUSS* 49, no. 1 (2011): 54, 55. Van Groningen points out that those who seek to extract theological truths from what they consider to be non-factually historical texts in Genesis 1 and 2 are actually “a type of inverted allegorical exegesis.” In contrast to ancient allegorists who tried to draw spiritual truths from historical texts or events, “contemporary exegetes attempt to draw historic facts from symbolic, mythical, religious stories, which have been drawn from various deeply religious pagan sources.” See G. van Groningen, “Interpretation of Genesis,” *JETS* 13.4 (1970): 217.

74. See Richard M. Davidson, “Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millennium,” *JATS* 11 (2000): 108–11, for the biblical evidence and secondary literature cited there. Even

the sanctuary of Eden is a symbol (or better, a type) of the heavenly sanctuary (Ezek. 28:12–14; Exod. 25:9, 40). But because it points beyond itself does not detract from its own literal reality. Neither does the assigning of functions in this Eden sanctuary exclude the material creation that also took place during the literal six days of creation.⁷⁵ The Genesis creation account does lead the reader to worship—worship of the true Creator God (see the first angel’s message in Rev. 14:6, 7)—but the account itself is not liturgy or worship.

Presuppositions and the witness of biblical scholars: Some biblical scholars, who reject a literal, six-day creation week, frankly admit that their ultimate criterion for such rejection is on the level of foundational presuppositions, in which the *sola Scriptura* principle is no longer maintained. Rather, some other authority or methodology—be it science, ancient Near Eastern materials, historical-critical principles (methodological doubt, causal continuum, rule of analogy), and so on—has been accepted in place of the *sola Scriptura* principle. This is true of both liberal-critical and conservative-evangelical scholars.

For example, evangelical scholars Karl Giberson and Francis Collins acknowledge the great weight of the so-called assured results of science with regard to origins in their interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2:

We do not believe that God would provide two contradictory revelations. God’s revelation in nature, studied by science, should agree with God’s revelation in Scripture, studied by theology. Since the revelation from science is so crystal clear about the age of the earth, we believe we should think twice before embracing an approach to the Bible that contradicts this revelation.⁷⁶

more recently (2001), see Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 85–88.

75. Walton, in *Lost World of Genesis One*, insists that there is only functional and not material creation in the six days of creation described in Genesis 1. However, his attempts to argue that the verbs for “create” and “make” have nonfunctional meaning in this chapter cannot withstand close semantic scrutiny. For example, according to the biblical text, God clearly materially created or made humans on the sixth day (Gen. 1:26, 27), as well as assigned functions to them (v. 28). For a thorough review and critique of assumptions undergirding Walton’s proposed “cosmic temple inauguration” interpretation of Genesis 1, see Jacques B. Doukhan, “A Response to John H. Walton’s *Lost World of Genesis One*,” *AUSS* 49.1 (2011): 197–205; Martin Hanna, “It Takes a Miracle: An Analysis of John H. Walton’s View of Cosmic Temple Inauguration,” *AUSS* 49.1 (2011): 177–89; John C. Lennox, *Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning According to Genesis and Science* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2011), 130–49; Nicholas P. Miller, “A Scholarly Review of John H. Walton’s Lectures at Andrews University on the *Lost World of Genesis One*,” *AUSS* 49.1 (2011): 191–95; and Randall W. Younker and Richard M. Davidson, “The Myth of the Solid Heavenly Dome: Another Look at the Hebrew רָקִיעַ (rāqīa’),” *AUSS* 49.1 (2011): 125–47, esp. 145, 46.

76. Karl W. Giberson and Francis S. Collins, *The Language of Science and Faith: Straight Answers to Genuine Questions* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2011), 69, 70.

Two other evangelical scholars, Richard Carlson and Tremper Longman, freely acknowledge their preunderstanding regarding the relationship between science and theology: “We believe contemporary science addresses questions on *how* physical and biological processes began and continue to develop, while theology and philosophy answer *why* for these same questions.”⁷⁷ To cite another example, Walton presupposes that in order to understand biblical culture, including the biblical view of creation, “The key then is to be found in the literature from the rest of the ancient world.”⁷⁸ Based upon the supposed nonmaterial functional creation described in ANE literature, Walton finds the same in Genesis 1 and 2 and, thus, is free to accept theistic evolution as taught by science, since the Bible does not speak of material creation.

Building upon foundational insights of Langdon Gilkey’s seminal essay⁷⁹ and Fernando Canale’s research,⁸⁰ Tiago Arrais analyzes other examples where “cosmological premises are brought into the interpretation of Genesis 1 through methodological assumptions.”⁸¹ The presence of non-biblical, macro-hermeneutical presuppositions in the interpretation of Genesis 1 is, unfortunately, too seldom acknowledged (or apparently even consciously recognized).

I find it fascinating—yes, ironic—to note that liberal-critical scholars, who frankly acknowledge their historical-critical presuppositions, who do not take the authority of the early chapters of Genesis seriously, and thus, who have nothing to lose with regard to their personal faith and the relationship between faith and science, have almost universally acknowledged that the intent of the Genesis 1 writer was to indicate a week of six literal days. Against those who would contend that the writer(s) of the early chapters of Genesis are not intending literal history, and that this is the view of “the great majority of contemporary Scripture scholars,” the concordist Alvin

77. Richard F. Carlson and Tremper Longman III, *Science, Creation and the Bible: Reconciling Rival Theories of Origins* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2010), 13.

78. Walton, *Lost World of Genesis 1*, 12.

79. Langdon B. Gilkey, “Cosmology, Ontology, and the Travail of Biblical Language,” *JR* 41.3 (1961): 194–205.

80. Fernando Canale, *Creation, Evolution and Theology: The Role of Method in Theological Accommodation* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University LithoTech, 2005).

81. Tiago Arrais, “The Influence of Macro-Hermeneutical Presuppositions in Recent Interpretations of Genesis 1: An Introduction to the Problem,” in *The Book and the Student: Theological Education as Mission (Festschrift Honoring José Carlos Ramos)*, ed. Wagner Kuhn (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Department of World Mission, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2012), 131–45, esp. 137.

Plantinga collects samples of these statements.⁸² For example, Julius Wellhausen, a giant in critical biblical scholarship, popularizer of the Documentary Hypothesis for the Pentateuch, wrote concerning the writer of Genesis: “He undoubtedly wants to depict faithfully the factual course of events in the coming-to-be of the world, he wants to give a cosmogonic theory. Anyone who denies that is confusing the value of the story for us with the intention of the author.”⁸³ Again, Gunkel, father of form criticism, says, “People should never have denied that *Genesis* 1 wants to recount how the coming-to-be of the world actually happened.”⁸⁴

Plantinga also cites James Barr, whom he describes as “Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford until he joined the brain-drain to the US and an Old Testament scholar than whom there is none more distinguished.” Barr writes: “To take a well-known instance, most conservative evangelical opinion today does not pursue a literal interpretation of the creation story in Genesis. A literal interpretation would hold that the world was created in six days, these days being the first of the series which we still experience as days and nights.” Then, after substantiating that evangelical scholars do not generally hold to a literal interpretation of the creation account, Barr continues: “In fact, the only natural exegesis is a literal one, in the sense that this is what the author meant.”⁸⁵ Elsewhere, Barr goes even further:

So far as I know there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of *Genesis* 1–11 intended to convey to their readers the ideas that: (a) creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience; (b) the figures contained in the Genesis genealogies provide by simple addition a chronology from the beginning of the world up to the later stages of the

82. Alvin Plantinga, “Evolution, Neutrality, and Antecedent Probability: A Reply to McMullin and Van Till,” in *Intelligent Design Creationism and Its Critics: Philosophical, Theological, and Scientific Perspectives*, ed. Robert T. Pennock (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001), 216, 17.

83. Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, trans. Albert Wolters, 6th ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1927), 296, quoted in Plantinga, “Evolution, Neutrality, and Antecedent Probability,” 216.

84. Gunkel, *Genesis*, 216, quoted in Plantinga, “Evolution, Neutrality, and Antecedent Probability.” See also Gunkel’s statement regarding the days of Genesis 1: “The ‘days’ are of course days and nothing else,” *Genesis*, 97.

85. James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London: SCM, 1981), 40, 42.

Biblical story, and (c) Noah's flood was understood to be worldwide, and to have extinguished all human and land animal life except for those in the ark.⁸⁶

Another giant in Old Testament scholarship not cited by Plantinga is Gerhard von Rad, probably the foremost Old Testament theologian of the twentieth century and another critical scholar who refuses to accept Genesis 1 as factual, yet nonetheless honestly confesses, "What is said here [Genesis 1] is intended to hold true entirely and exactly as it stands."⁸⁷ "Everything that is said here [in Genesis 1] is to be accepted exactly as it is written; nothing is to be interpreted symbolically or metaphorically."⁸⁸ Von Rad is even more specific regarding the literal creation week: "The seven days [of creation week] are unquestionably to be understood as actual days and as a unique, unrepeatable lapse of time in the world."⁸⁹

We could add to this list of critical scholars the preponderance of major interpreters of Genesis down through the history of the Christian church,⁹⁰ and in modern times, "whole coveys or phalanxes" (to use Plantinga's expression) of conservative evangelical

86. *Ibid.*, personal letter to David C. K. Watson, April 23, 1984, published in the *Newsletter of the Creation Science Association of Ontario*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1990–91; quoted in Plantinga, "Evolution, Neutrality, and Antecedent Probability," 217.

87. von Rad, *Genesis*, 47.

88. Gerhard von Rad, "The Biblical Story of Creation," in *God at Work in Israel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1980), 99. Von Rad's next sentence is intriguing: "The language [of Genesis 1] is actually scientific, though not in the modern sense of the word." Von Rad argues that Genesis 1 combines theological and scientific knowledge into a holistic picture of creation.

89. *Ibid.*, 65.

90. See especially, Duncan and Hall, "24-Hour View," 47–52, for a survey of the history of interpretation, which "confirms that the cumulative testimony of the Church favored normal creation days until the onslaught of certain scientific theories" (47). In another article, David W. Hall, "The Evolution of Mythology: Classic Creation Survives As the Fittest Among Its Critics and Revisers," in *Did God Create in Six Days?* ed. Joseph A. Pipa Jr. and David W. Hall (Taylors, S.C.: Southern Presbyterian, 1999), 265–302, demonstrates that "the long history of biblical interpretation, and specifically the Westminster divines' written comments, endorse only one of the major cosmological views considered today: *They thought creation happened neither in an instant nor over a long period, but in the space of six normally understood days*" (265, emphasis in original). Hall shows how modern proponents of nonliteral days for creation have distorted the views of various interpreters of Genesis in the history of the Christian church in order to try to make their writings support a long-age interpretation, when in fact, they do not. More recently, see James R. Mook, "The Church Fathers on Genesis, the Flood, and the Age of the Earth," in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, Ariz.: Master Books, 2008), 23–51; and David W. Hall, "A Brief Overview of the Exegesis of Genesis 1–11: Luther to Lyell," in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, Ariz.: Master Books, 2008), 53–78.

scholars, who support a literal six-day creation as the intention of the narrator of Genesis 1.⁹¹

Based upon my personal study of the Genesis account of creation (Gen. 1–2) and later intertextual allusions to this account, I must join the host of scholars—ancient and modern and both critical and evangelical—who affirm that Genesis 1 and 2 teach a literal, material creation week consisting of six historical, contiguous, creative, natural twenty-four-hour days, followed immediately by a literal twenty-four-hour seventh day, during which God rested, blessed, and sanctified the Sabbath as a memorial of creation.

But this leads us to our next point, concerning whether all of creation described in Genesis 1 and 2 is confined to that literal creation week or whether there is a creation prior to the creation week.

SINGLE OR TWO-STAGE BEGINNING?

Does the opening chapter of the Bible depict a single week of creation for all that is encompassed in Genesis 1, or does it imply a prior creation before creation week and some kind of time gap between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:3—2:4? This issue focuses upon the

91. For example, John Hartley: “Ancient readers would have taken ‘day’ to be an ordinary day. . . . A seven-day week of creation anchors the weekly pattern in the created order.” John E. Hartley, *Genesis*, NIBCOT (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson/Carlisle, UK: Pater-noster, 2000), 52. The testimonies of various other interpreters who employ the grammatical-historical method may be multiplied. Already with Martin Luther (representing the unanimous view of the Reformers), there was a break from the allegorical method of medieval exegesis: “We assert that Moses spoke in the literal sense, not allegorically or figuratively, i.e., that the world, with all its creatures, was created within six days, as the words read.” Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1–5*, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 1 (St. Louis, Miss.: Concordia, 1958), 5. This view can be traced in numerous conservative-evangelical commentators. Nineteenth-century commentator C. F. Keil writes: “The six creation-days, according to the words of the text, were earthly days of ordinary duration” (Keil, *Pentateuch*, 1:69). H. Leupold counters various arguments for a nonliteral interpretation and concludes that only “six twenty-four hour days followed by one such day of rest” fits the context of Genesis 1 and the fourth commandment (H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* [Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg, 1942], 58). John Sailhamer writes: “That week [Gen. 1:3ff.], as far as we can gather from the text itself, was a normal week of six twenty-four-hour days and a seventh day in which God rested” (Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 95). Terence Fretheim concludes: “It is my opinion that those who defend the literal meaning of the word [“day” in Genesis 1] have the preponderance of the evidence on their side” (Fretheim, “Days of Creation,” 14). Victor Hamilton is clear: “Whoever wrote Genesis 1 believed he was talking about literal days” (Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 53). John H. Stek concurs: “Surely there is no sign or hint within the narrative [of Genesis 1] itself that the author thought his ‘days’ to be irregular designations—first a series of undefined periods, then a series of solar days—or that the ‘days’ he bounded with ‘evening and morning’ could possibly be understood as long eons of time” (John H. Stek, “What Says the Scripture?” in *Portraits of Creation: Biblical and Scientific Perspectives on the World’s Formation*, ed. Howard J. van Till et al. [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990], 237).

relationship among Genesis 1:1, 1:2, and 1:3—2:4. Scholars have advanced different interpretations of this relationship.

Active Gap Theory

A first interpretation is often labeled as the ruin-restoration or the active-gap view. According to this understanding,⁹² Genesis 1:1 describes an originally perfect creation some unknown time ago (millions or billions of years ago). Satan was ruler of this world, but because of his rebellion (described in Isa. 14:12–17), sin entered the universe. Some proponents of the active-gap position hold that God judged this rebellion and reduced it to the ruined, chaotic state described in Genesis 1:2. Others claim that Satan was allowed by God to experiment with this world, and the chaos described in Genesis 1:2 is the direct result of satanic experimentation. In any case, those holding this view translate Genesis 1:2 as follows: “But the earth *had become* a ruin and a desolation” (emphasis added).⁹³

Genesis 1:3 and the following verses then present an account of a later creation in which God restores what had been ruined. The geological column is usually fitted into the period of the first creation (Gen. 1:1) and the succeeding chaos—not in connection with the biblical flood.

The ruin-restoration or active-gap theory flounders purely on grammatical grounds: it simply cannot stand the test of close grammatical analysis. Genesis 1:2 clearly contains three noun clauses and the fundamental meaning of noun clauses in Hebrew is something fixed, a state or condition, not a sequence or action.⁹⁴ According to laws of Hebrew grammar, one must translate “the earth *was* unformed

92. See, for example, Arthur C. Custance, *Without Form and Void* (Brockville, Canada: By the Author, 1970); the *Scofield Reference Bible* (1917, 1967); and Jack W. Provonsha, “The Creation/Evolution Debate in the Light of the Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan,” in *Creation Reconsidered: Scientific, Biblical, and Theological Perspectives*, ed. James L. Hayward (Roseville, Calif.: Association of Adventist Forums, 2000), 310, 11.

93. Custance, *Without Form and Void*, 7.

94. *GKC*, 454, par. 141, i. For analysis and refutation of the ruin-restoration theory both on philological and theological grounds, with particular focus upon the grammatical impossibility of this view’s interpretation of Genesis 1:2, see especially F. F. Bruce, “‘And the Earth was Without Form and Void,’ An Enquiry Into the Exact Meaning of Genesis 1, 2,” *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 78 (1946): 21–23; Weston W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled: A Critique of the Gap Theory of Genesis 1:1, 2* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Light and Life, 1973); Robert L. Reymond, “Does Genesis 1:1–3 Teach a Creation out of Nothing?” in *Scientific Studies in Special Creation*, ed. Walter E. Lammerts (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), 14–17; and Bruce Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3: Part II: The Restitution Theory,” *BSac* 132 (1975): 136–43.

and unfilled,” not “the earth *became* unformed and unfilled.” Thus, Hebrew grammar leaves no room for the active-gap theory.

Initial Unformed-Unfilled View: No-Gap and Passive-Gap Theories

The no-gap and passive-gap theories are subheadings of an interpretation of biblical cosmogony in Genesis 1 known as the “initial unformed-unfilled” view. This is the traditional view, having the support of the majority of Jewish and Christian interpreters through history.⁹⁵ According to this initial unformed-unfilled view (and common to both the no-gap and passive-gap theories), Genesis 1:1 declares that God created “the heavens and the earth”; verse 2 clarifies that the earth was initially in a state of *tohû*, or “unformed,” and *bōhû*, or “unfilled”; and verse 3 and the verses that follow describe the divine process of forming the unformed and filling the unfilled.

I concur with this view, because I find that only this interpretation cohesively follows the natural flow of these verses, without contradiction or omission of any element of the text. However, there is disagreement about two crucial aspects in this creation process among those who hold to the initial unformed-unfilled view. These concern (1) *when* the creation of the “heavens and earth” described in verse 1 occurred—either at the commencement, during the seven days of creation, or sometime before—and (2) *what* is referred to by the phrase “heavens and earth”—the entire universe or only this earth and its surrounding heavenly spheres (i.e., our solar system). Depending upon how these two aspects are interpreted, there are four major possibilities that present themselves: two variations of the no-gap theory and two variations of the passive-gap theory.

No-gap theory A: young universe, young life: According to the no-gap theory, verses 1 and 2 are part of the first day of the seven-day creation week, and the phrase “heavens and earth” is considered a merism that refers to the entire universe. This interpretation concludes that the entire universe was created in six literal days some

95. For a list (with bibliographical references) of major supporters, see especially Hasel, “Recent Translations,” 163, and Waltke, “Genesis Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3: Part III,” 216, 17. These include, for example, Martin Luther, John Calvin, C. F. Keil, F. Delitzsch, J. Wellhausen, E. König, G. Ch. Aalders, H. Leupold, Alexander Heidel, B. S. Childs, Derek Kidner, N. H. Ridderbos, E. J. Young, E. Maly, G. Henton, Gordon Wenham, and Nahum Sarna. Many of these supporters do not provide enough details to classify them in one of the subcategories that follow and, thus, will not be mentioned further.

6,000 years ago. This theory is known as the “young-universe, young-life” view and is equated with contemporary young-earth scientific creationism, espoused by many fundamentalists and conservative evangelicals and represented by such organizations as the Institute for Creation Research and Answers in Genesis.⁹⁶

No-gap theory B: young earth (not universe), young life (on earth): The other variant of the no-gap theory also sees verses 1 and 2 as part of the first day of the seven-day creation week but holds that “heavens and earth” refers only to this earth and its immediate, surrounding atmospheric heavens (and perhaps the solar system). This earth and its surrounding heavenly spheres were created during the Genesis 1 creation week, and according to this position, nothing is mentioned in Genesis 1 about the creation of the entire universe. This young-earth (not universe), young-life (on earth) interpretation has been posited by several scholars.⁹⁷

Passive-gap theory A: old universe (including earth), young life (on earth): With regard to the passive-gap options, some see verses 1 and 2 as a chronological unity separated by a gap in time from the first day of creation described in verse 3. The expression “heavens and earth” in verse 1 is taken as a merism to refer to the

96. This position was popularized by Henry Morris. See, for example, Henry M. Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1984); and id., *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1976), 17–104. This is the position of the various authors of the book *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, Ariz.: Master Books, 2008). See, for example, Boyd, “The Genre of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” 192: “It is clear what the author [of Genesis 1:1–2:3] is asserting: eternal God created space, time, matter, the stars, the earth, vegetation, animals, and man in one week.” See also Travis R. Freeman, “Do the Genesis 5 and 11 Genealogies Contain Gaps?” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, Ariz.: Master Books, 2008), 308: “The whole universe is also only about 6,000 years old.” In the concluding “Affirmations and Denials Essential to a Consistent Christian (Biblical) Worldview,” signed by the various authors of the book, a clear statement of this position is affirmed: “We affirm that the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 are chronological, enabling us to arrive at an approximate date of creation of the whole universe. . . . [W]e affirm that Genesis points to a date of creation between about 6,000–10,000 years ago” (454, 55).

97. Scholars who have advanced this position generally interpret Genesis 1:2 as symbolizing nothingness, with actual creation not starting until verse 3. This is one of several possibilities suggested by Niels-Erik Andreasen, “The Word ‘Earth’ in Genesis 1:1,” *Origins* 8 (1981): 17. Doukhan, *Genesis Creation Story*, 63–73, argued for this position but, more recently, has since explicitly distanced himself from this view (id., “The Genesis Creation Story,” 19). Supporters of the nothingness interpretation of Genesis 1:2 (which underlies this view) also include Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, Germany: Neukirchener, 1966), 141–44; and Nic. H. Ridderbos, “Gen 1:1 und 2,” in *Studies on the Book of Genesis*, ed. B. Gemser OuSt 12 (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1958), 224–27. For a critique of this interpretation of Genesis 1:2, see note 12.

entire universe that was created “in the beginning,” before creation week (which initial creation may be called the *creatio prima*). Verse 2 describes the “raw materials” of the earth in their unformed-unfilled state, which were created before—perhaps long before—the seven days of creation week. Verse 3 and the following verses depict the actual creation week (which may be called *creatio secunda*).⁹⁸ This is the old-universe (including the earth), young-life (on earth) view and is widely held by Seventh-day Adventist scholars as well as by a number of other interpreters.⁹⁹

Passive-gap theory B: old earth, young life (on earth): Another variant of the passive-gap position also sees Genesis 1:1 separated from verse 3 by a chronological gap, but considers the expression “heavens and earth” as referring only to this earth and its surrounding heavenly spheres, which were in their unformed-unfilled state for an unspecified length of time before the events described in creation week. According to this possibility, nothing is said about the creation of the universe in Genesis 1. This is the old-earth, young-life (on earth) position and is supported by some Seventh-day Adventist scholars.¹⁰⁰

98. For the terms *creatio prima* and *creatio secunda*, I am indebted to Moskala, “Interpretation of *bĕrē’šīt*,” 42.

99. This view was supported by Adventist pioneers, such as Uriah Smith, *Review and Herald* (July 3, 1860): “Nor is there anything in revelation which forbids us to believe that the substance of the earth was formed long before it received its present organization. The first verse of Genesis may relate to a period millions of ages prior to the events noticed in the rest of the chapter” (emphasis added). See also Thomas P. Arnold, “Genesis 1:1—Title Summarizing 1:2–31 or *Ex Nihilo* Creation Before 1:2–31” (paper, Annual ETS Convention, Washington, D.C., November 16, 2006), 1–8; id., *Two Stage Biblical Creation: Uniting Biblical Insights Uncovered by Ten Notable Creation Theories* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Thomas Arnold Publishing, 2007), 367–418 and passim; Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 50–55, 78; Gorman Gray, *The Age of the Universe: What Are the Biblical Limits?* (Washougal, Wash.: Morningstar, 2000); Moskala, “Interpretation of *bĕrē’šīt*,” 33–48; Emerson Cooper, *The Origin of the Universe* (Enumclaw, Wash.: WinePress, 2003), 60–62; Anton Pearson, “An Exegetical Study of Genesis 1:1–3,” *BSQ* 2 (1953): 20, 21; Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 247–49; id., “Genesis,” 41–43 (although Sailhamer limits the meaning of “earth” to a localized Promised Land of Eden—see section 5 for discussion and critique); and Randall W. Younker, *God’s Creation: Exploring the Genesis Story* (Nampa, Id.: Pacific Press, 1999), 33–35. See Harold G. Coffin, *Origin by Design* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 1983), 292, 93, and Lennox, *Seven Days That Divide the World*, 53, who also allow for this possibility.

100. See, for example, William H. Shea, “Creation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 2000), 419, who states: “The text acknowledges the fact that the inert earth was in a watery state before the events of Creation week, but is not especially concerned with identifying how long it may have been in that state.” Shea identifies the phrase “heavens and earth” of Genesis 1:1 as referring only to this earth and its surrounding atmospheric heavens (ibid., 420). See also Robert H. Brown, “Bringing the Human Neighborhood into Existence: Another Look at Creation Week,” *Adventist Review* (February 8, 2007): 24–27; and Warren L. Johns, *Three Days before*

Evaluation: Even though the no-gap theory A—young universe, young life—is very popular among conservative evangelicals and Christian fundamentalists, Seventh-day Adventist interpreters have generally rejected this option, because positing a creation of the entire universe in the six-day creation week does not allow for the rise of the Great Controversy in heaven, involving the rebellion of Lucifer-turned-Satan and his angels, that is described in many biblical passages as a process that clearly took far more than a week to develop (Isa. 14:12–17; Ezek. 28:11–19; Rev. 12:3–12).¹⁰¹ Furthermore, it contradicts the clear statement in Job 38:4–7, which reveals that, at the laying of this earth’s foundations, the unfallen heavenly beings (the “morning stars” and “sons of God”) were already in existence:

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The young universe, young life view also falters if Genesis 1:1, 2 may be shown to stand outside the six days of creation described in Genesis 1:3 and following verses, evidence for which will be presented below.

The no-gap theory B—young earth (not universe), young life (on earth)—is a possibility that I do not totally rule out. Proponents of this view argue that the terms *haššāmayim*, “the heavens,” and *hā’āreš*, “earth,” in verse 1 are the same terms found later in the chapter and, thus, should be regarded as referring to the same

the Sun (La Vergne, Tenn.: GenesisFile.com, 2011), 179–81; and Ferdinand O. Regaldo, “The Creation Account of Genesis 1: Our World Only or the Universe?” *JATS* 13, no. 2 (2002): 108–20. Some of the biblical interpreters in Christian history who have argued for an initially unformed-unfilled state of the earth do not make clear whether they accept this position (old earth, young life) or the no-gap theory (young earth [not universe], young life [on earth]); i.e., they do not specify whether there is a chronological gap or not between the unformed-unfilled state of the earth and the activity described in Genesis 1:3–31. Under this view may also be placed other scholars who have translated Genesis 1:1 as a dependent clause or regard it as an introduction or title and, therefore, assume that the earth is already in existence as God begins His creative work and that nothing is said in the text whether God created the unformed-unfilled earth or not.

101. For discussion of Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 as referring to the fall of Satan, see especially Jose Bertolucci, “The Son of the Morning and the Guardian Cherub in the Context of the Controversy between Good and Evil” (ThD diss., Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 1985), *passim*. Some seek to circumvent this problem by positing the existence of parallel universes, but this speculative hypothesis is not supported by the biblical evidence, which portrays the close interrelationship between the heavenly angelic realm and the earthly human realm as part of a single cosmos/universe (see, e.g., Ps. 148; 1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 4:10; 6:12; Heb. 1:2; 11:3; Rev. 5:11–13).

identities: this earth and its surrounding heavenly spheres, not the entire universe. They also point out that the phrase translated as “the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1) appears again in virtually the same form at the conclusion of the six days of creation (Gen. 2:1), and suggest that Genesis 1:1 and 2:1 constitute an *inclusio* introducing and concluding the six days of creation. Furthermore, the reference in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue to “the heavens and the earth” being made “in six days” (Exod. 20:11; cf. 31:17) is seen as supporting this position. However, as will be discussed below, a careful examination of these very points actually favors the passive-gap A view—old universe (including earth), young life (on earth).

Evidence for a two-stage creation of this earth (the passive-gap interpretation): The four alternative positions we have presented in this section may also be labeled in terms of the number of creation stages represented and what is being created:

| | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| No-gap A | = | single-stage creation (of the entire universe) |
| No-gap B | = | single-stage creation (of this earth only) |
| Passive-gap A | = | two-stage creation (of the entire universe, including this earth) |
| Passive-gap B | = | two-stage creation (of this earth only) |

A number of textual considerations and intertextual parallels lead to a preference of the two-stage creation (passive-gap) interpretation in general and, more specifically, variation A (the two-stage creation of the entire universe), also called the old-universe (including earth), young-life (for this earth) view.

First, as John Hartley points out in his NIBCOT commentary, “The consistent pattern used for each day of creation tells us that verses 1 and 2 are not an integral part of the first day of creation (vv. 3–5). That is, these first two verses stand apart from the report of what God did on the first day of creation.”¹⁰² Hartley is referring to the fact that each of the six days of creation begins with the words, “And God said” and ends with the formula, “And there was evening and there was morning, day [x].” If the description of the first day is consistent with the other five, this would place verses 1 and 2 outside of, and therefore before, the first day of creation.

102. Hartley, *Genesis*, 41.

Second, recent discourse analysis of the beginning of the Genesis 1 creation account indicates that the discourse grammar of these verses points to a two-stage creation. C. John Collins notes that none of the verbs in Genesis 1:1, 2 are in the *wayyiqtol* form (the verb in v. 1 is in the perfect, and the three clauses in v. 2 are all stative); the first *wayyiqtol* form appears in verse 3, and each of the other workdays begin with this form. Hence, the main storyline does not start until verse 3. He further notes that the verb *bārā*, “create,” in Genesis 1:1 is in the perfect inflection, and he shows how throughout the Pentateuch “the normal use of the perfect at the very beginning of a pericope is to denote an event that took place before the storyline gets under way.”¹⁰³ This implies a previous creation of the heavens and earth in their unformed-unfilled state before the beginning of creation week and supports either variation of the passive-gap interpretation.

Third, as we will argue under the section of the what of creation (section 5), the phrase “the heavens and the earth” in Genesis 1:1 is most probably to be taken here, as often elsewhere in Scripture, as a merism (*merismus*) to include all that God has created—in other words, the entire universe. If “heavens and earth” refers to the whole universe, this “beginning” (at least for part of the heavens) must have been *before* the first day of earth’s creation week, since the “sons of God” (unfallen created beings) had already been created and sang for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid (Job 38:7). This point supports the passive-gap theory A, as opposed to B.

Fourth, we will also argue in the what section (section 5) that the dyad “heavens and earth” (entire universe) of Genesis 1:1 are to be distinguished from the triad “heaven, earth, and sea” (the three earth habitats) of Genesis 1:3–31 and Exodus 20:11. This means that the creation action of Genesis 1:1 is outside or before the six-day creation of Exodus 20:11 and of Genesis 1:3–31. (This point also supports passive-gap theory A, not B.)

103. Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 51 (and see 50–55 for discussion of the discourse analysis). For additional Pentateuchal examples, see Gen. 3:1; 4:1; 15:1; 16:1; 21:1; 24:1; 39:1; 43:1; Exod. 5:1; 24:1; 32:1; Num. 32:1. Collins points out that this grammatical feature could theoretically refer to a summary statement in Genesis 1:1 (there is one Pentateuchal example of this discourse-grammatical form referring to a summary, i.e., Gen. 22:1), but the identity of Genesis 1:1 as a summary or title (as argued especially by Bruce Waltke) is rendered unlikely for other reasons (see our discussion above and the critique of Waltke’s position by Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 54, and Arnold, “Genesis 1:1,” 1–8.) For similar discourse (text-linguistic) analysis of this passage, see Bediako, *Genesis 1:1–2:3*, 106–9.

Fifth, the expression “the heavens and the earth” indeed brackets the first creation account, as noted by those who support the no-gap theory. But what is not usually recognized in that argumentation is that the phrase “heavens and earth” appears twice at the end of the creation account of Genesis 1:1–2:4a. It occurs in Genesis 2:1, but in this verse, it is used to refer to the triad of habitats found in Genesis 1:3–31. The entire phrase that we find in this verse is “the heavens and the earth, *and all the host of them*” (emphasis added), which is not a merism, like in Genesis 1:1, but a reference to the biosphere, which is formed and filled during the six days of creation. There is, however, a merism employing the dyad “heavens and earth” at the end of the Genesis 1 creation account.¹⁰⁴ It is found in 2:4a: “This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created.” It is this reference to “heavens and earth” that parallels the phrase in Genesis 1:1 and, like Genesis 1:1, refers to the creation of the entire cosmos (i.e., the universe). We thus find a chiasmic structure, with an ABBA pattern, in the usage of the phrase “heavens and earth”:

- A: *Genesis 1:1*—dyad or merism (heavens and earth), referring to the entire universe.
- B: *Genesis 1:3–31*—triad (heaven, earth, sea) of earth’s three habitats.
- B: *Genesis 2:1*—triad (heavens and earth and their hosts) involving earth’s three habitats.
- A: *Genesis 2:4a*—dyad or merism (“heavens and earth”), referring to the entire universe.¹⁰⁵

This point supports passive-gap theory A and not theory B.

Sixth, Sailhamer points out that the Hebrew word for “beginning” used in Genesis 1:1, *rēʾšīt*, “does not refer to a point in time but to a *period* or *duration* of time which falls before a series of events.”¹⁰⁶ In

104. There is a scholarly debate whether Genesis 2:4a should be seen as the end of the first Genesis creation account (Gen. 1:1–2:4a; RSV, NEB, NIV, NRSV, JB, and NJPS), or as the beginning of the second (Gen. 2:4a–25; ESV, NKJV, and NASB). It is very possible that verse 4 is a unity (indicated by the chiasmic structure) and yet transitional between the first and second creation accounts, as argued by Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 109: “The word order of Genesis 2:4a, ‘the heavens and the earth,’ together with the verb ‘created,’ point back to 1:1 in the first pericope. Then 2:4b introduces the new divine name, ‘the LORD God,’ which points forward to 2:5–3:24.”

105. For further discussion of this literary construction and its theological implications, see Moskala, “Interpretation of *bērēʾšīt*,” 42n28; id., “Two Genesis Creation Accounts,” 48 (esp. n12).

106. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 38, emphasis added. Sailhamer refers to other biblical examples of this usage for the word *rēʾšīt* (e.g., Jer. 28:1) and contrasts with other Hebrew

the context of Genesis 1:1–3, this would seem to imply that (a) in the first verse of the Bible, we are taken back to the process of time in which God created the universe; (b) sometime during that process, this earth¹⁰⁷ was created, but it was initially in an “unformed-unfilled” (*tohû-bôhû*) state;¹⁰⁸ and (c) as a potter or architect first gathers his materials and, then at some point later, begins shaping the pot on the potter’s wheel or constructing the building, so God, the Master Artist—Potter and Architect—first created the raw materials of the earth and then, at the appropriate creative moment, began to form and fill the earth in the six literal working days of creation week. The text of Genesis 1:1 does not indicate how long before creation week the universe (heavens and earth) was created. This and the following points could be seen to support a two-stage creation, either variation A or B of the passive-gap interpretation.

Seventh, already in the creation account of Genesis 1:3–31, there is an emphasis upon God’s differentiating or separating previously created materials. On the second day, God divided what was already present—the waters from the waters (vv. 6–8). On the third day, the dry land appeared (which seems to imply it was already present under the water), and the previously existing earth brought forth vegetation (vv. 9–12). On the fifth day, the waters brought forth the fish (v. 20), and on the sixth day, the earth brought forth land creatures (v. 24), implying God’s use of pre-existing elements. As we will note in the section 5 discussion on the what of creation, this same pattern seems to be true with the creation of the “greater” and “lesser” lights of the fourth day and the light of day one.¹⁰⁹

words for “beginning” that refer specifically to a beginning point of time (cf. *ibid.*, 38–44).

107. I take the Hebrew word *hā’āreṣ*, or “the earth,” in Genesis 1:2 to refer to our entire globe and not just to the localized land of promise for Israel as Sailhamer interprets it. See section 5, the what of creation, for further discussion.

108. I deliberately avoid using the word “chaos” to describe this condition of the planet before creation week, because, as we have noted above, the terms *tohû—bôhû* do not refer to a “chaotic, unorganized universe” but to the earth in a state of “unproductiveness and emptiness.” See Tsumura, *Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2*, esp. 155, 56.

109. A potentially weighty objection to the two-stage creation interpretation argues that if the earth in its unformed-fulfilled state was covered by darkness before day one of creation week, then how could God mark off the “evening” of that first day (assuming, as argued by McGuire, “Evening or Morning,” 201–14, that the biblical day did start with the “evening”). I believe it is important to note the difference between “evening” and “darkness”; these are not equated in Genesis 1:3–5. As McGuire correctly points out (202), the term “evening” here may be best translated “sunset” (or its pre-fourth-day equivalent). Also I suggest that it is

Eighth, such a two-stage process of creation in Genesis 1, like the work of a potter or architect, is supported by the complementary creation account of Genesis 2. In Genesis 2:7, it is evident that God began with the previously created ground or clay and from this “formed” the man. There is a two-stage process, beginning with the raw materials—the clay—and proceeding to the forming of the man and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. It is probably not accidental that the narrator here uses the verb *yāšār*, “to form,” which describes what a potter does with the clay on his potter’s wheel. The participial form of *yāšār* actually means “potter;” and the narrator may here be alluding to God’s artistic work as a Master Potter. In God’s creation of the woman, He likewise follows a two-stage process. He starts with the raw materials that are already created—the “side” or “rib” of the man—and from this God “builds” (*bānâ*) the woman (Gen. 2:21, 22). Again, it is certainly not accidental that only here in Genesis 1 and 2 is the verb *bānâ*, “to architecturally design and build,” used for God’s creation. He is the Master Designer and Architect as He creates woman.

Ninth, intertextual parallels between Genesis 1 and 2 and the account of building the wilderness sanctuary and Solomon’s temple seem to point further toward a two-stage creation for this earth. We have already mentioned in passing that the work of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 is described in technical language that specifically parallels the building of Moses’s sanctuary and Solomon’s temple.¹¹⁰ Such intertextual linkages have led me to join numerous Old Testament interpreters in recognizing that, according to the narrative clues, the whole earth is to be seen as the original courtyard and the Garden of Eden as the original sanctuary or temple on this planet. What is significant to note for our purposes at this point is that the construction of both the Mosaic sanctuary and the Solomonic temple took place in two stages. First, came the

significant that the first thing mentioned in regard to this day is God’s command: “Let there be light” (v. 3). Although it is not possible to be dogmatic about what this implies for the first day, I suggest that the creation of (or appearance of previously created) light may have been employed by God to bring about the appearance of what the earth later looked like at sunset, with the light fading into darkness (of the first day). That was the marker of the beginning of the first day, and the second light transition was the appearance of light the next morning; these two light transitions, “evening” and “morning,” summarize the temporal markers of the first day (and those that followed in creation week).

110. For further discussion, see Richard M. Davidson, “Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millennium,” *JATS* 11 (2000): 108–11; id., *Flame of Yahweh*, 47, 48 (note especially the extensive bibliography in n133).

gathering of the materials according to the divine plans and command (Exod. 25:1–9; 35:4–9, 20–29; 36:1–7; 1 Chron. 28:1–29:9; 2 Chron. 2), and then came the building process utilizing the previously gathered materials (Exod. 36:8–39:43; 2 Chron. 3–4). A pattern of two-stage divine creative activity seems to emerge from these intertextual parallels that gives further impetus to accepting the passive-gap interpretation of Genesis 1.

Last, but certainly not least, God’s creative activity throughout the rest of the Bible often involves a two-stage process, presupposing a previous creation. Examples include God’s “creating” of His people Israel, using language of Genesis 1:2;¹¹¹ God’s creation of a “new heart” (Ps. 51:10);¹¹² His making of the “new [i.e., renewed] covenant” (Jer. 31:31);¹¹³ and Jesus’s healing miracles involving a two-stage creation (e.g., John 9:6, 7). In particular, the eschatological creation of the new heavens and earth presupposes previously existing materials. Inasmuch as protology parallels eschatology in Scripture (Gen. 1–3, matching Rev. 20–22), it is vital to observe the depictions of the eschatological New Creation described in 2 Peter 3:10–13 and Revelation 20 through 22 and their parallels with Genesis 1 and 2. After the second coming of Christ, the earth will return to its unformed-unfilled condition, paralleling Genesis 1:22 (see Jer. 4:23; Rev. 20:1, passages which use the terminology of Gen. 1:2). After the millennium, the earth

111. Deuteronomy 32:10, 11, describes God’s call and protection of Israel in the wilderness by clear allusions to creation as it utilizes in close proximity to two rare words found in Genesis 1:2: *tohû* (“formlessness”) and *mēraḥepet* (“hovering”). The theological import of the linkage is unambiguous: the narrator describes the call of Israel in the wilderness as a new creation, a concept that was greatly expanded by later biblical writers, especially the prophet Isaiah (see Isa. 4:5; 41:20; 43:1). As the earth was in a state of formlessness (*tohû*) at the beginning of creation week, so God found Israel in the formlessness (or wasteland, *tohû*) of the wilderness. As the Spirit of God was “hovering” (*mēraḥepet*) over the face of the waters at the beginning of creation week, so God was “hovering” (*mēraḥepet*) over Israel as it came out of Egypt. What is important to note for our purposes here is that Israel already had existed as a people for several hundreds of years before God “created” Israel as a nation in the wilderness at the time of the Exodus. God’s creation of Israel was not *ex nihilo* but was dependent upon the reality of a pre-existent people.

112. In Psalm 51:10 (MT, v. 12) David prays, “Create . . . in me a new heart, O God, and renew [*ḥādās*] a steadfast spirit within me,” using the same word as found in Genesis 1:1. But the clean heart is not created *ex nihilo*; as the parallelism shows, it is renewed from what was present before (the meaning of *ḥādās* can be “new” or “renewed”).

113. The “new [*ḥādās*] covenant” promised for Israel in the last days (Jer. 31:31; cf. Heb. 8:8–12; 10:16, 17) was not absolutely new but a renewal of the same DNA of the everlasting covenant. See Skip MacCarty, *In Granite or Ingrained? What the Old and New Covenants Reveal about the Gospel, the Law, and the Sabbath* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2007).

will be purified by fire (Rev. 20:9, 14, 15; 2 Pet. 3:10, 12), but “a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev. 21:1; cf. 2 Pet. 3:13) will not be created *ex nihilo*, but out of the purified raw materials (*stoicheion*, or “elements,” 2 Pet. 3:12) remaining from the fire purification process—elements that have been in existence for (at least) thousands of years (2 Pet. 3:10, 12). If the eschatological creation involved a two-stage process, with God utilizing previously created matter to create a “[re]new[ed] heaven and earth,” then it would not be out of character for God to have followed a similar two-stage creation in Genesis 1 and 2.¹¹⁴

A growing number of recent studies of Genesis 1:1–3 have come to support the conclusion of a two-stage creation and the passive-gap interpretation, in particular, the old-universe (including earth), young-life (on earth) variation.¹¹⁵ Collins’s conclusion is illustrative and represents my current understanding of Genesis 1:1–3:

It tells us of the origin of everything [in the universe] in 1:1 and then narrows its attention as the account proceeds. The first verse, as I see it, narrates the initial creation event; then verse 2 describes the condition of the earth just before the creation week gets under way. These two verses stand outside the six days of God’s workweek, and—just speaking grammatically—say nothing about the length of time between the initial event of 1:1 and the first day of 1:3.¹¹⁶

Those who support the no-gap theory often argue against the passive-gap theory by denying any evidence for such a theory in the biblical text: “There is no textual or contextual basis for supposing that it [Gen. 1:1] introduces a *second* process of creation described in Genesis 1:2–31, separated by an indefinite period of time (as much as 13.7 billion years) from a *first* process of creation mentioned in Genesis 1:1.”¹¹⁷ But I have set forth at least ten lines of evidence from the text that in fact does support a two-stage creation.

114. For further support of a two-stage creation process in Genesis 1, see the discussion in Copan and Craig, *Creation out of Nothing*, 60–65. Copan and Craig point out that this position in no way implies “eternally preexistent matter”; “there is nothing belonging to the composition of the universe (whether material or formal), which had an existence out of God before this divine act in the beginning” (64). Furthermore, “there is an elegant, purposeful depiction of a two-step process to creation—not a clumsy, ad hoc one” (63).

115. Besides those mentioned in the footnotes above, see the various ancient and modern supporters of a two-stage creation, in Copan and Craig, *Creation out of Nothing*, 59–65; and Arnold, *Two Stage Biblical Creation*, passim.

116. Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 78.

117. Bull and Guy, *God, Sky and Land*, 36, emphasis added.

In connection with this argument, it is often conjectured that “the ‘gap theory’ seems to be motivated by a desire to harmonize Genesis 1 with modern scientific understandings of the size and age of the known universe by interpreting Genesis 1:2–31 as describing only the creation of life on planet Earth.”¹¹⁸ It is suggested that the passive-gap theory is “a concordist endeavor to harmonize Scripture and Science . . . we are being forced to accept the gap by science, not by Scripture.”¹¹⁹ My answer to these arguments is that I have come to my present conviction regarding the proper interpretation of Genesis 1:1–3 not because of an attempt to harmonize Scripture and science. I could be just as comfortable believing in a creation of both raw materials and the life forms of earth within a period of six literal contiguous days, all with an appearance of old (mature) age, if this were the direction the biblical evidence pointed. In fact, I used to defend this position. But it is the Hebrew text of Genesis 1, not science, that leads me to support my current position, the passive-gap—the old universe (including this earth), young life (for this earth)—interpretation of Genesis 1. My interpretation is not dependent upon, or motivated by, the accuracy or

118. *Ibid.*, 36n24.

119. Marco T. Terreros, “What is an Adventist? Someone Who Upholds Creation,” *JATS* 7, no. 2 (1996): 148. For other philosophical or theological arguments that could be raised against the passive gap theory, see *ibid.*, 147–49, and my reply in Davidson, “Biblical Account of Origins,” 24, 25n69. See also the argument against the passive gap set forth by Regaldo, “Creation Account of Genesis 1,” 115–20, that the Hebrews “were not much concerned with whatever might be beyond this world because they perceived their world in unity, looking at their world in a concrete way, and they did not perceive their world as preexistent,” and, thus, would not be “concerned with the creation of other planets or other worlds.” Although I agree that the Hebrew mind did see the world as a unity and concretely, I do not see this as preventing them from recognizing the preexistence of the earth in an unformed-unfilled state before Creation week or for recognizing the existence of other worlds (see discussion above, with biblical support, for just such recognition by inspired Bible writers). For further evidence against the passive-gap interpretation, some have pointed to Ellen White’s statement that “in the creation of the earth, God was not indebted to pre-existing matter” (*The Ministry of Healing* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1905; repr. 1942], 414; cf. *8T* 258), but this quotation is not dealing with the issue of passive-gap versus no-gap but opposing the view that matter is eternal, not created by God. Similar statements by Ellen White, which, at first glance, seem to refer to the creation of earth’s matter during creation week, actually favor the two-stage creation. See, for example, *Signs of the Times* (January 8, 1880, par. 1): “In the work of creation, when the dawn of the first day broke, and the heavens and the earth, by the call of infinite power, came out of darkness; responsive to the rising light, ‘the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’” What had been in darkness (for an unspecified time), on the first day came into the light. See also references to when the earth “came forth” and was “called into existence” and “fitted up” (e.g., Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* [Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1890; repr. 1958], 44), which clearly in context have reference to the work of the creation week (Gen. 1:3ff.) and do not preclude the earlier creation of earth in its unformed-unfilled state (Gen. 1:2).

inaccuracy of the radiometric time clocks for earth rocks but represents an attempt to be faithful to Scripture, and if some scientific data are harmonized in the process, then all the better. John Lennox has stated it well:

Quite apart from any scientific considerations, the text of Genesis 1:1, in separating the beginning from day 1, leaves the age of the universe indeterminate. It would therefore be logically possible to believe that the days of Genesis are twenty-four-hour days (of one earth week) *and* to believe that the universe is very ancient. I repeat: this has nothing to do with science. Rather, it has to do with what the text actually says.¹²⁰

Implications for modern scientific interpretation: Despite my preference for the passive-gap theory A interpretation (old universe [including earth], young life [on earth]) over the passive-gap theory B interpretation (old earth, young life [on earth]), or the no-gap theory B interpretation (young earth [not universe], young life [on earth]), I acknowledge a possible openness in Genesis 1:1, 2 that (at least theoretically) allows for any of these options. However, I do not see any room in the biblical text, viewed in light of the larger biblical context, for the no-gap theory A view (young universe [including earth], young life).¹²¹

The possible openness in the Hebrew text as to whether there is a gap or not between Genesis 1:1 and verses 3 through 31 has implications for interpreting the pre-fossil layers of the geological column. If one accepts the no-gap theory B option (young earth [not universe], young life [on earth]), there is a possibility of relatively young pre-fossil rocks, created as part of the seven-day creation week, perhaps with the appearance of old age. If one accepts the passive-gap theory A option (old universe [including earth], young life [on earth], my preference) or the passive-gap theory B option (old earth, young life [on earth]), there is the alternate possibility of the pre-fossil raw materials being created at a time of absolute beginning of this earth and its surrounding heavenly spheres at an unspecified time in the past. This initial unformed-

120. Lennox, *Seven Days That Divide the World*, 53, emphasis in original.

121. Some might argue from theoretical physics that this view might be possible if heaven is considered to be outside our universe. However, even if such were the case, this view would not seem to cohere with the larger biblical context, in which other inhabited worlds ("the morning stars," presumably within our universe) were in existence before and actually watched the creation of this earth (Job 38:7).

unfilled state is described in verse 2. Verses 3 through 31 then describe the process of forming and filling during the seven-day creation week.

I conclude that the biblical text of Genesis 1 leaves room for either (a) young pre-fossil rock, created as part of the seven days of creation (with the appearance of old age), or (b) much older pre-fossil earth rocks, with a long interval between the creation of the inanimate raw materials on earth described in Genesis 1:1, 2 and the seven days of creation week described in Genesis 1:3 and the following verses (which I find the preferable interpretation). In either case, the biblical text calls for a short chronology for the creation of life on earth. According to Genesis 1, there is no room for any gap of time in the creation of life on this earth: it came during the third through the sixth of the literal, contiguous, (approximately) twenty-four-hour days of creation week. That leads us to our next point.

A RECENT OR REMOTE BEGINNING?

We have no information in Scripture as to how long ago God created the universe as a whole. But there is strong evidence for concluding that the creation week described in Genesis 1:3–2:4 was recent, sometime in the last several thousand years and not hundreds of thousands, millions, or billions of years ago. The evidence for this is found primarily in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11. These genealogies are unique, with no parallel among the other genealogies of the Bible or other ANE literature.¹²² Unlike the other genealogies, which may (and, in fact, often do) contain gaps, the “chronogenealogies” of Genesis 5 and 11 have indicators that they

122. For other biblical genealogies, see especially Gen. 4:16–24; 22:20–24; 25:1–4, 12–18; 29:31–30:24; 35:16–20, 22–26; 39:9–14, 40–43; 46:8–12; 1 Sam. 14:50, 51; 1 Chron. 1–9; Ruth 4:18–22; Matt. 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–28. For comparison with ANE genealogies, see, for example, Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 and their Alleged Babylonian Background,” *AUSS* 16.2 (1978): 361–74; and Richard S. Hess, “The Genealogies of Genesis 1–11 and Comparative Literature,” in *I Studied Inscriptions Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura, SBTS 4 (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 58–72. Hess has shown that there are various subgenres of genealogies, and the genre of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 is very different from the ANE genealogies, with very different formal characteristics, functions, and orientation. According to Hess, the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 seemed to reveal a whole different view of history from that of the ANE parallels and tend to emphasize the forward thrust of history, with attention to specific historical-chronological data concerning each person mentioned in the genealogy (life span and age at which the next name bearer is begotten), which is never given in other ANE genealogies.

are being presented as complete genealogies without gaps. These unique interlocking features indicate a specific focus on chronological time and reveal an intention to make clear that there are no gaps between the individual patriarchs mentioned. A patriarch lived x years, begat a son; after he begat this son, he lived y more years and begat more sons and daughters; and all the years of this patriarch were z years. These tight interlocking features make it virtually impossible to argue that significant generational gaps exist. Rather, their intent is to present the complete time sequence from father to direct biological son throughout the genealogical sequence from Adam to Abraham.

To further substantiate the absence of major gaps¹²³ in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11, the Hebrew grammatical form of the verb “begat” (*yālad* in the *Hip’il*) used throughout these chapters is the special causative form that elsewhere in the Old Testament always refers to actual direct, physical offspring (i.e., biological father-son relationship) (Gen. 6:10; Judg. 11:1; 1 Chron. 8:9; 14:3; 2 Chron. 11:21; 13:21; 24:3). This is in contrast to the appearance of *yālad* in the simple *Qal* in many of the other biblical genealogies in which cases it is not always used in reference to the direct physical fathering of immediately succeeding offspring. In Genesis 5 and 11, there is clearly a concern for completeness, accuracy, and precise length of time.¹²⁴

There are several different textual versions of the chronological data in these two chapters: MT (Hebrew text), LXX (Greek translation),

123. I do acknowledge the possibility of minor gaps (or duplications) in Genesis 5 and 11, due to such factors as scribal omissions or additions. An example is the mention of a second Cainan in the LXX of Genesis 5 and in Luke 3, as opposed to only one Cainan in the MT. In light of the scholarly consensus that the MT more likely approximates the original, the second Cainan is probably a secondary addition, although there is the possibility that a second Canaan has been inadvertently dropped out of the Hebrew text. For a review of evidence supporting the likelihood that “a second Cainan never existed” and that “his name was probably added to Luke’s account just prior to the fourth century,” see Freeman, “Do the Genesis 5 and 11 Genealogies Contain Gaps?,” 308–13.

124. For further support of this position, see Travis R. Freeman, “A New Look at the Genesis 5 and 11 Fluidity Problem,” *AUSS* 42.2 (2004): 259–86; id., “The Genesis 5 and 11 Fluidity Question,” *TJ* 19.2 (2004): 83–90; id., “Do the Genesis 5 and 11 Genealogies Contain Gaps?,” 283–313. This is contra, for example, Cottrell, “Inspiration and Authority,” 203; and Lawrence Geraty, “The Genesis Genealogies as an Index of Time,” *Spectrum* 6 (1974): 5–18; and Douglas R. Clark, “The Bible: Isn’t It About Time?” in *Understanding Genesis: Contemporary Adventist Perspectives*, ed. Brian Bull, Fritz Guy, and Ervin Taylor (Riverside, Calif.: Adventist Today Foundation, 2006), 112–26. All these studies fail to recognize the differences between the other genealogies of the Bible and other ANE literature, on one hand, and the unique chronogenealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 on the other.

and Samaritan Pentateuch. The scholarly consensus is that the MT has preserved the original figures in their purest form, while the LXX and Samaritan versions have intentionally schematized the figures for theological reasons. But regardless of which text is chosen, it only represents a difference of a thousand years or so.¹²⁵

Regarding the chronology from Abraham to the present, there is disagreement among Bible-believing scholars whether the Israelite sojourn in Egypt was 215 years or 430 years and, thus, whether to put Abraham in the early second millennium or the late third millennium BC; but other than this minor difference, the basic chronology from Abraham to the present is clear from Scripture, and the total is only some 4,000 (plus or minus 200) years.¹²⁶

Thus, the Bible presents a relatively recent creation of life on this earth a few thousand years ago, not hundreds of thousands, millions, or billions. While minor ambiguities do not allow us to determine the exact date, according to Scripture the seven-day creation week unambiguously occurred recently. This recent creation becomes significant in light of the character of God, the next point in our outline. We can already say here that a God of love surely would not allow pain and suffering to continue any longer than necessary to make clear the issues in the Great Controversy. He wants to bring an end to suffering and death as soon as possible; it is totally out of character with the God of the Bible to allow a history of cruelty and pain to go on for long periods of time—millions of years—when it would serve no purpose in demonstrating the nature of His character in the cosmic controversy against Satan. Thus, the genealogies, pointing to a recent creation, are a window into the heart of a loving, compassionate God.

THE WHO: “IN THE BEGINNING GOD . . .”

The creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 emphasize the character of God. While accurately presenting the facts of creation, the emphasis is undoubtedly not so much upon creation as upon the Creator. As Mathews puts it: “God’ is the *grammatical* subject of

125. If following the MT, the period of history from Adam to the Flood is 1,656 years and from the Flood to Abraham 352 years, for a total of 2,008 years. For the LXX, the total from Adam to Abraham is 3,184 years, and for the Samaritan Pentateuch, the total is 2,249 years.

126. See “The Chronology of Early Bible History,” *SDABC* 1 (1953): 174–96. For the date of the Exodus as ca. 1450 BC, see especially, William H. Shea, “Exodus, Date of,” *ISBE* 2: 230–38.

the first sentence (1:1) and continues as the *thematic* subject throughout the account.”¹²⁷

’ĒLŌHĪM AND YHWH—THE CHARACTER OF GOD

In Genesis 1 and 2, two different names for God appear, not as supporting evidence for the documentary hypothesis, but in order to emphasize the two major character qualities of the Creator.¹²⁸ In Genesis 1:1–2:4a, He is ’*ēlōhīm*, which is the generic name for God, meaning “All-powerful One” and emphasizing His transcendence as the universal, cosmic, self-existent, almighty, infinite God. This emphasis upon God’s transcendence is in accordance with the universal framework of the first creation account, in which God is before and above creation and creates effortlessly by His divine Word. In the supplementary creation account of Genesis 2:4b–25, another name for the deity is introduced along with ’*ēlōhīm*. He is here also YHWH, which is God’s covenant name; He is the immanent, personal God who enters into intimate relationship with His creatures. Just such a God is depicted in this second creation account: One Who bends down as a Potter over a lifeless lump of clay to “shape” or “form” (*yāṣār*) the man and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life (2:7); Who plants a garden (2:8); and Who “architecturally designs or builds” (*bānā*) the woman (2:22) and officiates at the first wedding (2:22–24). Only the Judeo-Christian God is both infinite and personal to meet the human need of an infinite reference point and personal relationship.

Any interpretation of the biblical account of origins must recognize the necessity of remaining faithful to this two-fold portrayal of God’s character in the opening chapters of Scripture. Interpretations of these chapters, which present God as an accomplice, active or passive, in an evolutionary process of survival of the fittest, over millions of years of predation, prior to the fall of humans, must seriously reckon with how these views impinge upon the character of God. Evolutionary creation (theistic evolution) or progressive creationism makes God responsible for millions of years of death, suffering, natural selection, and survival of the fittest, even before sin. Such positions seem to malign the character of God, and the biblical interpreter should pause to consider whether such inter-

127. Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 113, emphasis added.

128. See footnote 3 for a bibliography supporting the unity and complementarity of Genesis 1 and 2.

pretations of origins are consistent with the explicit depictions of God's character in Genesis 1 and 2 and elsewhere in Scripture.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

There are a number of other considerations related to the who of creation, including, among others, the following points, which we can only summarize here:

1. No proof of God is provided, but rather, from the outset comes the bold assertion of His existence.
2. God is the ultimate foundation of reality. As Ellen White expresses it: "'In the beginning God.' Here alone can the mind in its eager questioning, fleeing as the dove to the ark, find rest."¹²⁹
3. The portrayal of God in the creation account provides a polemic against the polytheism of the ANE with its many gods, their moral decadence, the rivalry and struggle among the deities, their mortality, and their pantheism (the gods are part of the uncreated world matter).¹³⁰
4. There are intimations of the plurality in the Godhead in creation, with mention of the "Spirit of God" (*rûaḥ 'ēlōhîm*) in Genesis 1:2;¹³¹ the creative Word throughout the creation account (ten times in Gen. 1); and the "let us" of Genesis 1:26, most probably is "a plural of fullness," implying "within the divine Being the distinction of personalities, a plurality within the deity, a 'unanimity of intention and plan' . . . ; [the] germinal idea . . . [of] intra-divine deliberation among 'persons' within the divine Being."¹³²

129. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903), 134.

130. For further discussion of the polemical nature of Genesis 1 and 2, see the section 4 discussion (the how of creation).

131. Elsewhere in Scripture, this Hebrew phrase always (eighteen times) refers to "Spirit of God," not "mighty wind." Further, in the rest of Genesis 1, *'ēlōhîm* always refers to God and is not used as a marker for the superlative. Also, note the adverb describing the Spirit's work of *mēraḥepet*, or "hovering," which in the only other occurrence of the word in the Pentateuch refers to the protective hovering of the eagle over its young (Deut. 32:11). For full canvassing of the options and argumentation supporting the translation "Spirit of God," see especially Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 111–15; and Richard M. Davidson, "The Holy Spirit in the Pentateuch" (paper presented at the Ninth South American Biblical-Theological Symposium, Iguassu Falls, Brazil, May 20, 2011), to be published by the South American Division as a chapter in a forthcoming volume on the Holy Spirit.

132. Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Meaning of 'Let Us' in Gen 1:26," *AUSS* 13 (1975): 65; see 58–66 for further discussion and critique of other views. See Jifí Moskala, "Toward Trinitarian Thinking in the Hebrew Scriptures," *JATS* 21, no. 2 (2010): 249–59, who also critiques

5. The who of creation also helps us answer the why of creation. With intimations of a plurality of persons within the deity and the character of God being one of covenant love (as $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$), it would be only natural for Him to wish to create other beings with whom He could share fellowship. This is implicit in the creation account of Proverbs 8 where Wisdom (a hypostasis for the preincarnate Christ)¹³³ is “rejoicing” (literally, “playing, sporting”) both with $\Upsilon\text{H}\text{W}\text{H}$ and with the humans who have been created (vv. 30, 31). It is explicit in Isaiah 45:18: “He did not create it [the earth] to be empty [*tohu*], but formed it to be inhabited” (NIV).

THE HOW: “IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED . . .”

Many scholars claim that the biblical creation accounts are not concerned with the how of creation but only with the theological point that God created. It is true that Genesis 1 and 2 provide no technical scientific explanation of the divine creative process. But there is a great deal of attention to the how of divine creation,¹³⁴ and this cannot be discarded as the husk of the creation accounts in order to get at the theological kernel of truth that God was the Creator. Though not given in technical scientific language, Genesis nonetheless describes the reality of the divine creative process, using clear observational language. It seems that the events of the six days of creation “are told from the perspective of one who is standing on the earth’s surface observing the universe with the naked eye.”¹³⁵ The biblical text gives several indicators of the how of creation.

the various views and identifies this plural as a “plural of fellowship or community within the Godhead” (258). See also, Kidner, *Genesis*, 33; Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 133, 34; Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 146, 47; and the “Angel of the Lord” passages later in Genesis: Gen. 16:7–13; 18:1, 2; 19:1; 31:11–13; 32:24, 30; 48:15, 16; cf. Hos. 12:3–6; (on these passages, see Moskala, “Toward Trinitarian Thinking,” 261–63, and Kidner, *Genesis*, 33). Approaching this position (but remaining unclear what kind of plurality within the Godhead is implied) is Thomas A. Keiser, “The Divine Plural: A Literary-Contextual Argument for Plurality in the Godhead,” *JOT* 34.2 (2009): 131–46.

133. See Richard M. Davidson, “Proverbs 8 and the Place of Christ in the Trinity,” *JATS* 17, no. 1 (2006): 33–54.

134. Fretheim, “Days of Creation,” 32: “While the central concern [in Genesis 1] is in questions of ‘why,’ Israel is also interested in questions of how the world came into being, and herein the ancient author integrates them into one holistic statement of the truth about the world.”

135. Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 144. The description of the earth’s luminaries as light bearers for the earth (Gen. 1:15, 16) illustrates this geocentric perspective.

BY DIVINE *BĀRĀ*'

According to Genesis 1, God creates by divine *bārā*', "create" (Gen. 1:1, 21, 27; 2:4a). This Hebrew verb in the *Qal* describes exclusively God's action; it is never used of human activity. It is also never used with the accusative of matter: what is created is something totally new and effortlessly produced. By itself, the term does not indicate *creatio ex nihilo* (see Ps. 51:12 [10 Eng.]), as has been sometimes claimed. However, in the context of the entire verse of Genesis 1:1, taken as an independent clause describing actual new material creation of the entire universe, *creatio ex nihilo* is explicitly affirmed. By employing this term, the Genesis account provides an implicit polemic against the common ANE views of creation by sexual procreation¹³⁶ and by a struggle with the forces of chaos.

BY DIVINE FIAT

Creation in Genesis 1 is also by divine fiat: "And God said, 'Let there be . . .'" (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). The psalmist summarizes this aspect of how God created: "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth . . . For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:6, 9). According to Genesis 1, the universe and this earth are not self-existent, random, or struggled for. The Genesis account is in stark contrast with the Mesopotamian concept of creation, resulting from the cosmogonic struggle among rival deities or the sexual activity of the gods, and it is also in contrast with Egyptian Memphite theology, where the creative speech of the god Ptah is a magical utterance.¹³⁷ In biblical theology, the word of God is concrete; it is the embodiment of power. When God speaks, there is an immediate response in creative action. Part of God's word is His blessing, and in Hebrew thought, God's blessing is the empowering of the one or the thing blessed to fulfill the intended function for which she, he, or it was made. God's creation by divine fiat underscores the centrality of the Word in the creation process.

AS A POLEMIC

Specific terminology is used (or avoided) by the narrator, which appears to be an intentional polemic against the mythological

136. For a summary of these ANE portrayals of creation by sexual activity, see Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 85–97.

137. See Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 117.

struggle with a chaos monster and the polytheistic deities found in the Mesopotamian creation texts.¹³⁸ We have noted some examples of these already. As an additional example, the word *têhôm*, “deep,” in Genesis 1:2 is an unmythologized masculine rather than the mythological feminine sea monster Tiamat. Again, the names “sun” and “moon” (vv. 14–19) are substituted with the generic terms “greater light” and “lesser light,” because the Hebrew names for these luminaries are also the names of deities. As a final example, the term *tan-nînim* (“sea monsters,” vv. 21–22), the name for both mythological creatures and natural sea creatures or serpents, is retained (as the only vocabulary available to express this kind of animal), but this usage is coupled with the strongest term for creation *bārāʾ* (implying something totally new, no struggle), a term not employed in Genesis 1 since verse 1, to dispel any thought of a rival god.¹³⁹

The how of creation was no doubt penned by the narrator under inspiration with a view toward exposing and warning against the polytheistic Egyptian environment surrounding Israel before the Exodus and the Canaanite environment in which Israel would soon find themselves. But the omniscient Divine Author certainly also inspired this creation account in order to be a polemic for all time against views of creation that might violate or distort the true picture of God’s creative work. The inspired description of God’s effortless, personal, and rapid creation by divine fiat protects modern humanity from accepting naturalistic, violent, and random components as part of our picture of creation.

DRAMATICALLY AND AESTHETICALLY

God is portrayed in Genesis 1 and 2 as the Master Designer, creating dramatically and aesthetically. We have already noted in the previous section how God, like a potter, *yāšār*, “formed,” the man and, like an architect, *bānâ*, “designed or built,” the woman. When He made this world, He surely could have created it in an instant, if He had chosen to do so, but He instead dramatically choreographed the creation pageant over seven days. Note the aesthetic symmetry of the very structure of God’s creation in space and time, similar to

138. See especially, Hasel, “Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” 81–102; id., “Cosmology in Genesis 1”; and Hasel and Hasel, “Unique Cosmology,” chap. 1.

139. The term *bārāʾ* is reserved for the pivotal moments in the first creation account when God’s effortless transcendence are to be emphasized (Gen. 1:1, 21, 27; 2:4a); the normal word for “make” (*ʿāśâ*) is used elsewhere in the narrative (Gen. 1:7, 16, 25, 26; 2:2, 4b).

the Hebrew aesthetic technique of synthetic parallelism, in which a series of words, acts, or scenes is completed by a matching series. God is both scientist and artist.

| Introduction (Gen. 1:1, 2) | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| Genesis 1:1, 2 | <i>toḥû</i> (“unformed”) | <i>bōḥû</i> (“unfilled”) |
| Genesis 1:3–31 | Forming | Filling |
| | a. light | a ¹ . luminaries |
| | b. sky and water separated | b ¹ . inhabitants of sky and water |
| | c. dry land and vegetation | c ¹ . inhabitants of land, animals, and humankind |
| Conclusion (Gen. 2:2–3) | | |
| Creation and Santification of the Sabbath | | |

IN THE SPAN OF SIX DAYS

We have already discussed the literal six days of creation with regard to the when of creation, but this concept is also an important component of the how of creation. On one hand, according to Genesis 1, God’s method of creation is not an instantaneous, timeless act in which all things, as described in Genesis 1 and 2, in one momentary flash suddenly appeared. Contrary to the suppositions of Greek dualistic philosophy, which influenced the worldview of early Christian thinkers, such as Origen and Augustine (and still underlies the methodology of much Catholic, Protestant, and modern thought), God is not essentially timeless and unable to enter into spatiotemporal reality.¹⁴⁰ Genesis 1 and 2 underscore that God actually created in time as well as in space, creating the raw materials of the earth during a period of time before creation week and then deliberately and dramatically forming and filling these inorganic, pre-fossil materials throughout the seven-day creation week. Thus, Genesis 1 and 2 serve as a strong bulwark against Greek dualistic thought and call the contemporary interpreter back to radical biblical realism in which God actually enters time and space, creates in time and space, and calls it very good.

On the other hand, the method of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 is also a powerful witness against accepting the creation week as

140. For further discussion and critique, see, for example, Fernando Luis Canale, “Philosophical Foundations and the Biblical Sanctuary,” *AUSS* 36.2 (1998): 183–206.

occupying long ages of indefinite time, as claimed by proponents of progressive creationism. We have found that Genesis 1:3 to 2:3 clearly refer to the creation week as seven literal, historical, contiguous, creative, natural twenty-four-hour days. We have further concluded that all life on planet Earth was created during this creation week (days three through six) and not before. Any attempt to bring long ages into the creation week, either through some kind of progressive creation or some other nonliteral, nonhistorical interpretation of the creation week of Genesis 1, is out of harmony with the original intention of the text. We have cited numerous quotations from both critical and conservative scholars that acknowledge this fact. Likewise, we have seen that Genesis 1 demands an interpretation of rapid creation for the life forms on this planet—plants on day three, fish and fowl on day five, and the other animals and humans on day six. There is no room in the biblical text for the drawn-out process of evolution (even so-called rapid evolution) to operate as a methodology to explain the origin of life during creation week.

THE WHAT: “IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH”

“THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH”: THE UNIVERSE (GEN. 1:1)

Some have interpreted the phrase in Genesis 1:1, “the heavens and the earth” [*’ēt haššāmayim wē’ēt hā’āreš*], to refer only to this earth and its surrounding heavenly spheres (i.e., the atmosphere and perhaps beyond to include the solar system). This interpretation is following the contextual lead of the usages of the terms “heavens” and “earth” later in Genesis 1 (esp. vv. 8, 10) and cannot be absolutely ruled out as a possible way of understanding this phrase.¹⁴¹ However, significant differences may be noted between the use of the phrase “the heavens and the earth” in the opening verse of Genesis 1 compared to the use of the two terms “heavens” and “earth” separately later in the chapter. In Genesis 1:1, both “the heavens” and “the earth” contain the article, whereas when these

¹⁴¹ Until recently, I have interpreted the phrase in this way. Supporters of this view include, for example, Andreassen, “The Word ‘Earth’ in Genesis 1:1,” 17; Shea, “Creation,” 420; and Regalado, “The Creation Account of Genesis 1,” 108–20.

are named in Genesis 1:8, 10, they do not have the article. More importantly, Genesis 1:1 features a dyad of terms (“the heavens and the earth”), whereas Genesis 1:8, 10 employ a triad: “heavens,” “earth,” and “sea.”

Genesis commentators generally agree that, when used together as a pair in the Hebrew Bible, the dyad of terms “the heavens and the earth” constitute a merism for the totality of all creation in the cosmos (i.e., what we would describe as the entire universe) and that such is also the case in Genesis 1:1.¹⁴² As Sailhamer puts it, “By linking these two extremes into a single expression—‘sky and land’ or ‘heavens and earth’—the Hebrew language expresses the totality of all that exists.”¹⁴³ I am persuaded that this observation is most likely valid. Thus, Genesis 1:1, as we have already intimated in an earlier section of this study, refers to the creation of the entire universe, which took place “in the beginning,” prior to the seven-day creation week of Genesis 1:3 to 2:3.¹⁴⁴

It is important to emphasize that this still strongly implies *creatio ex nihilo*, “creation out of nothing”; God is not indebted to pre-existing matter. We also repeat here for emphasis that the whole universe was not created in six days, as some ardent conservative creationists have mistakenly claimed. Furthermore, if the passive-gap, two-stage-creation interpretation is correct, then the creation of “the heavens and the earth” during the span of time termed “in

142. A merism (or *merismus*) is a statement of opposites denoting totality. The usage of this compound phrase to indicate “the all” of God’s creation in the cosmos (i.e., what we call the universe) is explicit in such Old Testament texts as Isa. 44:24 and Joel 3:15, 16; and implicit in such passages as Gen. 14:19, 22; 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Chron. 29:11; 2 Chron. 2:12; Ps. 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; Jer. 23:24; 32:17; 51:48. See the precise parallel to Genesis 1:1 in John 1:1–3, where the latter seems to clearly refer to all created things in the universe. See also other New Testament passages such as Col. 1:16, 20. Among the preponderance of commentators who see “the heavens and the earth” as a merism for “universe” in Genesis 1:1, see, for example, G. Ch. Aalders, *Genesis*, trans. William Heynen, vol. 1, Bible Student’s Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1981), 52; Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 20; Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 103; Keil, *Pentateuch*, vol. 1, 47; Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 41; Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 140, 142; Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 55, 56; Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 5; von Rad, *Genesis*, 48; Waltke, *Genesis*, 59; and Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 15. This is contra, for example, Cottrell, “Inspiration and Authority,” 197, who claims that the phrase “the heavens and the earth” refer only to “the atmospheric heavens, or sky, and to the surface of the earth” and never to “the universe beyond our solar system or to the earth as a planet as we understand them today.”

143. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 56.

144. For a summary of grammatical and contextual evidence for interpreting Genesis 1:1 as referring to the creation of the entire universe, see, for example, Douglas C. Bozung, “An Evaluation of the Biosphere Model of Genesis 1,” *BSac* 162.648 (2005): 409–13.

the beginning” encompassed the whole galactic universe, including the planet Earth in its “unformed and unfilled” condition (Gen. 1:2).¹⁴⁵

“HEAVENS, EARTH, AND SEA” (GEN. 1:8–11; EXOD. 20:11): THE GLOBAL HABITATS OF OUR PLANET

By contrast to the spotlight on the entire universe in Genesis 1:1 (and again in the matching member of the inclusion of Gen. 2:4a), the use of the dyad “the heavens and the earth” in Genesis 1:2 and the reference to “the earth” by itself (in fact, placing the noun “the earth” in the emphatic position as the first word in the Hebrew clause) move the focus of this verse and the rest of the chapter to this planet.¹⁴⁶ The use of the triad “heavens,” “earth,” and “seas” named in Genesis 1:8–11 describes the basic threefold habitat of our planet: sky, land, and water. This threefold habitat was the object of God’s creative power during the six days of creation (1:3–31), as He filled these habitats with vegetation, birds, fish, land animals, and humans. At the conclusion of the six days of creation, the narrator summarizes the creation of this threefold habitat by indicating that “thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished” (2:1). By adding the phrase “all the host of them,”¹⁴⁷ the narrator makes clear that he is not employing the dyad or merism, which refers to the entire universe (as in 1:1

145. It has been widely suggested that the phrase “the heavens and the earth” always refers to a completed and organized universe in Scripture and, thus, cannot include the creation of an “unformed and unfilled” earth (e.g., Waltke, *Genesis*, 60). But several recent studies have shown that the essential meaning of “the heavens and the earth” is not completion and organization, but totality. See, for example, Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 12–15; Rooker, “Genesis 1:1–3,” 319, 20. Thus, while “heavens and earth” may indeed refer to an organized, finished universe elsewhere in Scripture, this need not control the unique nuance here in Genesis 1:1. Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 142, clarifies: “Although the phrase ‘heavens and earth’ surely points to a finished universe where it is found elsewhere in the Old Testament, we cannot disregard the fundamental difference between those passages and the context presented in Genesis 1 before us, namely, that the expression may be used uniquely here since it concerns the exceptional event of creation itself. To insist on its meaning as a finished universe is to enslave the expression to its uses elsewhere and ignore the contextual requirements of Genesis 1. ‘Heavens and earth’ here indicates the totality of the universe, not foremostly an organized, completed universe.”

146. So Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 142: “The term ‘earth’ (*’eres*) in v. 1 used in concert with ‘heaven,’ thereby indicating the whole universe, distinguishes its meaning from ‘earth’ (*’eres*) in v. 2, where it has its typical sense of ‘terrestrial earth.’”

147. Some modern versions blur this point when they paraphrase “all their hosts” to be synonymous with or descriptive of “heavens and earth.” For example, the NIV: “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.” The Hebrew word for “hosts” (*šābā’*) is often used in Scripture with regard to the various heavenly “hosts” or heavenly bodies (sun, moon, and stars or constellations) in the heavens (see Deut. 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kings 17:16; 21:3, 5; 23:4, 5; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 33:6; Isa. 34:4; 40:26; 45:12; Jer. 8:2; 19:3; 33:22; Zeph.

and 2:4a) but is referencing what was created during the six days of creation week (1:3–31).

Exodus 20:11 likewise refers back to this triad, stating that in six days God made “the heavens and earth, the sea”—the habitats of this planet, not the galactic universe.¹⁴⁸ Thus, Genesis 1:1 (followed by 2:4a) refers to God’s creation of the whole universe, while the remainder of Genesis 1 (summarized by Gen. 2:1) and Exodus 20:11 describe the creation of the three habitats of planet Earth.

Sailhamer insightfully calls attention to the distinction between Genesis 1:1—where the dyad “heavens and earth” refers to the entire universe—and the shift to this earth in the remainder of Genesis 1. Unfortunately, however, he then goes astray when he suggests that the term *hā’āreṣ*, “the earth”—seen in Genesis 1:2, throughout the account of the six-day creation (some twenty times in Gen. 1:2–2:1), and in the fourth commandment (Exod. 20:11)—be translated as “the land,” and he emphasizes that it refers only to the localized promised land for Israel and not to the whole planet’s land surface. Likewise, he errs when he maintains that the term *haššāmayim*, “the heavens,” in the Genesis 1 account of creation week refer only to the region above the localized promised land.¹⁴⁹

I am convinced that the context, replete with global (i.e., planet-wide) terms throughout Genesis 1, makes Sailhamer’s restricted interpretation of this chapter highly unlikely. It seems extremely arbitrary and, in fact, virtually impossible to limit the descriptions of creation week in Genesis 1:3–31 to the land between the Euphrates and the River of Egypt. How can the dividing of the light from the

1:5), and here in Genesis 2:1 it clearly refers to everything that God made on the earth and in its surrounding heavenly spheres during the six-day creation.

148. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 47–59, is to be credited with highlighting the difference between the dyad (“the heavens and the earth”) in Genesis 1:1 and the triad “heavens, earth, seas” in the remainder of Genesis 1 and pointing out that the former has reference to the whole universe. However, as noted below, Sailhamer takes a restricted, localized view of the meaning of the triad (which he translates as “sky, land, and seas”), a view which I argue is not supported by the context. In a private conversation, Randall W. Younker first pointed me to this distinction between the dyad and triad of terms and suggested (with Sailhamer) that the dyad (“heavens and earth”) of Genesis 1:1 refers to the entire universe but (against Sailhamer) that the triad (“heavens,” “earth,” and “seas”) mentioned later in Genesis 1 refers to the worldwide creation of planet Earth’s three habitats during creation week. He further pointed out that Exodus 20:11 utilizes the triad, not the dyad, and thus refers to the creation of the habitats on this planet and not to the creation of the whole universe. See now, Younker, *God’s Creation*, 33–35. I would add that Exodus 31:17, which only contains the two terms “the heavens and the earth,” is undoubtedly to be taken as a shortened form of the full triad in the fourth commandment to which this passage clearly alludes.

149. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 47–59.

darkness (v. 3) occur only in the promised land? How can the waters be divided from the waters (v. 6) only over the land promised to Israel? How can the waters be gathered into one place called “seas” (v. 10) in the promised land? How can the greater light rule the day and the lesser light the night only in a localized area? How can the birds fly across the sky (v. 17) only above the promised land? How can the sea creatures have been designed for the localized area of the future boundaries of Israel? How can the command given to humans to “fill the earth” and their charge to have dominion over “all the earth” be limited only to one localized area? All of this language is clearly global, not just limited to a small geographical area.

That the language of creation in Genesis 1:3–31 is global in extent is confirmed in succeeding chapters of Genesis 1 through 11. The trajectory of major themes throughout Genesis 1 through 11—the creation, the Fall, the plan of salvation, the spread of sin, the judgment by the Flood, God’s covenant with the earth—are all global in their scope. There are also many occurrences of global terms in the Flood narrative, including several intertextual linkages with Genesis 1.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, after the Flood, the precise command that was given to Adam is repeated to Noah: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Gen. 9:1, 7; cf. 1:28). Noah was not even in the promised land when this command was given, and the following chapter of the Table of Nations (Gen. 10) indicates that this command was to be fulfilled globally, not just in a localized area (see especially 10:32, “the nations were divided *on the earth* after the flood,” emphasis added). This global language continues in Genesis 11, where the “whole earth” involves all the languages of the earth (vv. 8–9). There can be little doubt that throughout Genesis 1 through 11 these references, and many others, involve global, not localized language, and the creation of the earth in Genesis 1:3–31 must perforce also be global in extent.

This conclusion is also substantiated by comparing the creation account of Genesis 1 to its parallel creation account in Proverbs 8:22–31. References to *hā’āreṣ*, “the earth,” in Proverbs 8:23, 26, 29 are, in context, clearly global in extent (e.g., “foundations of the earth,” v. 29), and this is further demonstrated by the parallelism between *hā’āreṣ*,

150. Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Evidence for the Universality of the Genesis Flood,” *Origins* 22, no. 2 (1995): 58–73; id. *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary: Why a Global Flood Is Vital to the Doctrine of Atonement*, ed. John T. Baldwin, rev. ed. (Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 2000), 79–92.

“the earth,” and the clearly global term *tēbēl*, “world,” in verse 26. Thus, we cannot accept Sailhamer’s suggestion that “the earth” and “the heavens” should be translated “land” and “sky” in Genesis 1:2 and following verses and refer to anything less than a global creation.¹⁵¹

THE TWO CREATION ACCOUNTS IN GENESIS 1 AND 2: IDENTICAL, CONTRADICTORY, OR COMPLEMENTARY?

Sailhamer has also mistakenly identified the global creation week of Genesis 1 with the creation of the localized Garden of Eden in Genesis 2:4b and following verses.¹⁵² Contra Sailhamer, it should be recognized that in the complementary creation account of Genesis 2:4b–25, the introductory “not yet” verses 5 and 6 continue the global usage of “the earth” of the Genesis 1 account, in describing the four things that had not yet appeared on the surface of the planet before the entrance of sin: thorns, agriculture, cultivation or irrigation, and rain. But then Genesis 2:7, describing the creation of Adam, gives the time frame of the Genesis 2 creation account (i.e., corresponding with the sixth day of the creation week of Gen. 1). The rest of Genesis 2 depicts in more detail the activities of God on the sixth day of creation week and is largely localized within the Garden of Eden.

Others have gone to the opposite extreme and have posited that Genesis 1 and 2 present radically different and contradictory accounts and that Genesis 2 recapitulates all (or most) of creation week rather than just day six.¹⁵³ Such a position often betrays a belief in the documentary hypothesis (source criticism) and two different redactors at work in the two accounts. Jacques Doukhan’s dissertation and William Shea’s literary analysis, among other important studies, provide evidence that Genesis 1 and 2 are the product of a single writer and present complementary theological perspectives on the creation of this world, with Genesis 1 providing a portrayal of the global creation as such and Genesis 2 focusing attention on humanity’s personal needs.¹⁵⁴ Several recent studies

151. For further critique of Sailhamer’s “limited geography” interpretation of Genesis 1, see Jordan, *Creation in Six Days*, 130–69.

152. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 69–77.

153. See, for example, Waltke, “Literary Genre of Genesis, Chapter One,” 7; and Guy, “Purpose and Function of Scripture,” 94–96. Guy summarizes his contention: “The representations of creation in Genesis 1:1–2:3 and 2:4–24 are mutually incompatible if both are read literally” (94).

154. Doukhan, *Genesis Creation Story*, passim. See also Shea, “The Unity of the Creation Account,” 9–38; and id., “Literary Structural Parallels between Genesis 1 and 2,” 49–68.

discuss in detail alleged contradictions between the Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 creation accounts and show how the supposed contradictions actually constitute complementarity in presenting a unified and integrated portrayal of creation.¹⁵⁵

As already referred to above, the four things mentioned as “not yet” in Genesis 2:4, 5 do not contradict Genesis 1 but simply list those things that had not yet appeared on the surface of the planet before the entrance of sin (thorny plants, agriculture, cultivation or irrigation, and rain). Jiří Moskala and Randall W. Younker point out that all these items are mentioned in anticipation of Genesis 3, when after the Fall they will come into the picture of human reality.¹⁵⁶ Note that neither of the expressions “plant of the field” (*śīaḥ haśśādeh*) nor “herb of the field” (*‘ēšeb haśśādeh*) used in Genesis 2:5 is found in Genesis 1, while the phrase “herb of the field” (*‘ēšeb haśśādeh*) appears in Genesis 3:18, thus linking it to after the Fall and referring to cultivated agricultural products eaten by humans as a result of their laborious toil.

Another (and perhaps the major) alleged contradiction between Genesis 1 and 2 is the apparent difference in the order of creation between the two accounts. In Genesis 1, the order is: vegetation (day three), birds (day five), animals (day six), and then humans, male and female (day six). Genesis 2 appears to give a different order: man (v. 7), vegetation (vv. 8, 9), animals and birds (vv. 19, 20), and woman (vv. 21, 22). The two main issues here relate to (1) the different order for the vegetation and (2) the different order for the animals and birds. The apparent contradiction regarding the vegetation disappears when it is recognized that Genesis 1:11, 12 describes how, in response to God’s creative word, the earth “brought forth” (*yāšā’*) vegetation, including the fruit trees, while in Genesis 2:8, 9 God “planted” (*nāṭa’*) a special garden, and out of the ground He “caused to grow” (*šāmaḥ*) additional specimens of various kinds of fruit trees that He had already created on day three of creation week.

At least two possible explanations have been suggested for the apparent contradiction regarding the order of the creation of the

155. See Moskala, “Fresh Look at Two Genesis Creation Accounts,” 45–65; and Randall W. Younker, “Genesis 2: A Second Creation Account?” in *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary*, 69–78. Cf. Beall, “Contemporary Hermeneutical Approaches to Genesis 1–11,” 154, 55.

156. Younker, “Genesis 2,” 50–58; cf. Moskala, “Fresh Look at Two Genesis Creation Accounts,” 15.

birds and animals. The first is to simply translate the perfect form of *yāṣār* as an English pluperfect “had formed”: “Now the LORD God had formed [*yāṣār*] out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them” (Gen. 2:19, NIV; cf. ESV). This is a legitimate translation of the Hebrew perfect inflection, which refers to completed action but may be translated as a simple past, a perfect, or a pluperfect, according to context. With the translation as a pluperfect, Genesis 2:19 is supplying necessary information in order to tell the story of Adam’s naming of the animals and, at the same time, implying that the creation of the animals had taken place at an earlier time but without giving precise chronological order of this creation.¹⁵⁷

Another possible explanation for the different order of animals and birds is set forth by Cassuto, who suggests that, like the planting of the special trees in the Garden of Eden on day six (apart from the general creation of vegetation on day three), according to Genesis 2:19, God is involved in a special additional creation of animals and birds beyond what was created earlier on the fifth and sixth days.¹⁵⁸ However, because of the fivefold use of the term *kol*, “all or every,” in Genesis 2:19, 20 (“all the wild animals . . . all the birds . . .,” NIV), I prefer the former explanation to the latter.¹⁵⁹

157. Some would regard such translation by the pluperfect as a case of special pleading, driven by the bias of the translators. However, if the comparative studies of Genesis 1 and 2 by Doukhan, Shea, and others indeed show that these chapters form a unity written by a single author, then it is not a case of inappropriate translator bias to seek to make sense of the author’s unified intention by using translation of grammatical forms that form a coherent and consistent presentation of the biblical writer’s ideas. The use of the perfect form of the verb as a pluperfect is a common feature of biblical Hebrew (e.g., Gen. 2:2; 7:9; 19:27; 24:15; 27:30; 29:10), and must be recognized as such when the context calls for such translation. See examples in *GKC*, para. 106ff.

158. Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 129.

159. Although the word *kol* can refer to either totality or partiality depending upon the context (Moskala, “Fresh Look at Two Genesis Creation Accounts,” 61n50), in Genesis 1 and 2 the term regularly refers to totality, and this appears to be the sense here as well. To posit the creation of a new set of animals and birds in Genesis 2 does not really solve the problem of contradiction with Genesis 1 but adds a new problem (of an additional creation, not mentioned in Genesis 1). A third possible explanation set forth by scholars is that “the order in the first creation account is principally chronological, whereas in the second it is principally logical.” See, for example, Lennox, *Seven Days That Divide the World*, 158. However, it appears that the second creation account focuses specifically upon the events of the sixth day, events connected to the creation of humankind, and thus, this explanation does not seem likely. For discussion of other alleged contradictions, see the treatments by Moskala and Younker cited above and see our next section dealing with the issue of light for the first three days of creation (before the light of the sun and moon appears).

LIGHT, THE “GREATER” AND “LESSER” LIGHTS, AND THE STARS

On the first day of creation God said, “‘Let there be light’; and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). He named the light “day” and darkness “night” (1:5). However, on the fourth day of creation week God ordered into existence “lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth . . . to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness” (1:15, 18). What was the source of the light that illumined our planet before the fourth day?

One possibility is that God’s presence was the source of light on the first day of creation. This is already hinted at in the literary linkage between Genesis 1:4 and Genesis 1:18. In verse 4, God Himself is the One Who “divided the light from the darkness”; while in verse 18, it is the luminaries that are “to divide the light from the darkness.” By juxtaposing these two clauses with exactly the same Hebrew words and word order, the reader is invited to conclude that God Himself was the light source of the first three days, performing the function that He gave to the sun and moon on the fourth day. Another implicit indicator of this interpretation is found in the intertextual linkage between Genesis 1 with Psalm 104, the latter being a stylized account of the creation story following the same order of description as in the creation week of Genesis 1. In the section of Psalm 104 paralleling the first day of creation (v. 2), God is depicted as covering Himself “with light as with a garment,” thus implying that God is the light source during the first days of creation week.¹⁶⁰ During the first three days God Himself could have separated the light from the darkness, just as He did at the Red Sea (Exod. 14:19, 20). God Himself being the light source for the first part of the week emphasizes the theocentric (God-centered), not heliocentric (sun-centered), nature of creation, and thus, God proleptically forestalls any temptation to worship the sun or moon that might have been encouraged if the luminaries had been the first objects created during the creation week.¹⁶¹

A second option suggests that the sun was created before the fourth day but became visible on that day, perhaps as a vapor cover was removed. This would explain the evening and morning cycle before day four. Sailhamer correctly points out that the Hebrew

160. Doukhan, *Genesis Creation Story*, 83–90. See the detailed discussion of Psalm 104 in chapter 5 of this volume.

161. See also Revelation 21:23, where in the New Jerusalem “the glory of God illumined it, and the Lamb is its light.”

syntax of Genesis 1:14 is different from the syntactical pattern of the other days of creation, in that it contains the verb “to be” (in the jussive) plus the infinitive, whereas other days have only the verb without the infinitive. Thus, he suggests that verse 14 should read, “Let the lights in the expanse be for separating” (not as usually translated, “Let there be lights in the expanse”). Such a subtle but important syntactical shift may imply, Sailhamer suggests, that the lights were already in existence before the fourth day. The “greater” and “lesser” lights could have been created “in the beginning” (before creation week, Gen. 1:1) and not on the fourth day. On the fourth day, they were given a purpose: “to separate the day from the night” and “to mark seasons and days and years.”¹⁶²

Sailhamer’s suggestion does rightly call attention to a possible difference of syntactical nuances with regard to the wording of the fourth day, but it is not without its own difficulties.¹⁶³ Most serious is that Sailhamer views verse 16 not as part of the report of creation but as a commentary pointing out that it was God (and not anyone else) Who had made the lights and put them in the sky. I find this objection overcome if one accepts a variant of this view in which verse 16 is indeed part of the report and not just commentary. According to this variant, the sun and moon were created before creation week (v. 1), as Sailhamer suggests, but (unlike Sailhamer’s view) they were created in their *tohû* (“unformed”) and *bôhû* (“unfilled”) state as was the earth (cf. v. 2), and on the fourth day were further “made” (*‘āšâ*) into their fully functional state (v. 16).¹⁶⁴

What about the stars? Were they created on the fourth day or before? In the second option mentioned above, we noted how the Hebrew syntax of Genesis 1:14 may indicate that the sun and moon were already in existence before the fourth day and, thus, could have been created “in the beginning” (before creation week, v. 1). The same could also be true of the stars. Furthermore, the syntax of

162. For further discussion, see Sailhamer, “Genesis,” 2:33, 34; id., *Genesis Unbound*, 129–135. Sailhamer cites *GKC*, para. 114 h, in support of this possible difference in syntactical nuance. This position is also set forth by Doukhan, *Genesis Creation Story*, 26, 27.

163. See, for example, Shaw, “Literal Day Interpretation,” 211, 12, for a critique of Sailhamer’s view.

164. Perhaps a combination of the above options is possible. The sun and moon may have been created (in their *tohû*–*bôhû*, “unformed–unfilled” state) before creation week (with the sun as a “cold star” later to be “lit?”), and God Himself was the light source until day four. Such an approach has been suggested to me by a leading astronomer, but a physicist colleague finds such a suggestion incompatible with the current understanding of physics. I leave it to the scientists to further explore such options.

Genesis 1:16 doesn't require the creation of the stars on day four, and in fact, by not assigning any function to the stars, such as given to the sun and moon, they may be seen as a parenthetical statement added to complete the portrayal of the heavenly bodies—"He made the stars also"—without indicating when.¹⁶⁵

Colin House has argued that in Genesis 1:16 the stars are presupposed as already in existence before creation week and that this is indicated by the use of the Hebrew particle *wə 'ēt*, which he finds throughout Genesis to mean "together with." Thus, the Hebrew of Genesis 1:16c should read: "The lesser light to rule the night *together with the stars*."¹⁶⁶ As noted above, several passages of Scripture suggest that celestial bodies and intelligent beings were created before life was brought into existence on this planet (e.g., Job 38:7; Ezek. 28:15; 1 Cor. 4:9; Rev. 12:7–9), and this would correlate with the implications that emerge from Genesis 1:16.

DEATH OR PREDATION BEFORE SIN?

Do the Genesis creation accounts allow for the possibility that death or predation existed on planet Earth before the Fall and the entrance of sin described in Genesis 3? In answer to this question, we first must reiterate our conclusion regarding the active-gap or ruin-restoration theory discussed under the when of creation. This theory, which allows for long ages of predation and death before the creation week described in Genesis 1:3–31, cannot be grammatically sustained by the Hebrew text. Genesis 1:2 simply cannot be translated, "The earth *became* without form and empty." As we have seen above, there is room in the text for (and I believe the text actually favors) a passive gap in which God created the universe ("the heavens and the earth") "in the beginning" before creation week (Gen. 1:1); and the earth at this time was *tohû* ("unformed") and *bōhû* ("unfilled") and "darkness was on the face of the deep." But such description does not

165. See Doukhan, *Genesis Creation Story*, 28: "They [the stars] are only mentioned as extra information, like some kind of appendix, as if they were not directly relevant to the matter." Doukhan also recognizes the omission of any statement of the function of the stars, in contrast to the greater light and lesser light.

166. See Colin L. House, "Some Notes on Translating—וַיַּעַשׂ הַכִּכְבִּימִּים [*wə'ēt hakōkabîm*] in Genesis 1:16," *AUSS* 25.3 (1987): 241–48, emphasis added. This latter view is appealing but has some (not unsurmountable) syntactical obstacles. Another view suggests that the "stars" here in Genesis 1:16 actually refer to the planets, which were created on the fourth day. However, it does not seem likely that the Hebrew Bible here distinguishes between the stars and planets, since there is only one Hebrew word for all these heavenly bodies.

imply a negative condition of chaos, as has often been claimed, only that creation was not yet complete.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, the terms *tohû* (“unformed”) and *bôhû* (“unfilled”) in Genesis 1:2 imply a sterile, uninhabited waste, with no life—no birds, animals, or vegetation.¹⁶⁸ So not only is there no death on this world before creation week, but there is also no life! Genesis 1:1, 2 thus make no room for living organisms to be present upon planet Earth before creation week, let alone death and predation.

According to Genesis 1 and 2, death¹⁶⁹ is not part of the original condition or divine plan for this world. Doukhan’s insightful discussion of death in relation to Genesis 1 and 2 reveals at least three indicators that support this conclusion.¹⁷⁰ First, at each stage of creation, the divine work is pronounced “good” (Gen. 1:4, 10, 18, 21, 25), and at the last stage it is pronounced “very good” (v. 31). Humanity’s relationship with nature is described in positive terms of “dominion” (*rādâ*), which is a covenant term without a nuance of

167. See especially Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 140–44, for cogent arguments from the text that the flow in Genesis 1:1–2:1 is from incomplete to complete and not from a chaos that opposes God to the conquering of these hostile forces. This flow is clear from the conclusion in Genesis 2:1, where “the heavens and the earth and all their host” are now seen to be “finished” or “completed” [Heb. *kālâ*]. Mathews (ibid., 132) shows that the terms used in Genesis 1:2 are not negative ones; darkness is not a symbol of evil in this context but an actual entity that is later named (Gen. 1:5). He concludes, “the earth’s elements [Gen. 1:2] are not portraying a negative picture but rather a neutral, sterile landscape created by God and subject to his protection” (ibid., 143). This uninhabitable landscape is incomplete, “awaiting the creative word of God to make it habitable for human life.” For an even more detailed defense of this position, see the three-part series of articles by Roberto Ouro, “The Earth of Genesis 1:2: Abiotic or Chaotic?” *AUSS* 36, no. 2 (1998): 259–76; 37, no. 1 (1999): 39–53; and 38, no. 1 (2000): 59–67.

168. See Tsumura, *Earth and Waters in Genesis 1 and 2*, 42, 43, 155, 56.

169. When we refer to death in the biblical sense, it is death in the animal and human world that is in view. The Hebrew Scriptures do not use the word “death” to refer to plants, and thus, for the narrator of Genesis and his contemporaries, such experiences as the human (and animal) consumption of, for example, fruit, before the entrance of sin, would not be seen to involve the death of the fruit. (For discussion of the few passages that use the term “death” in a figurative way (as an analogy to humans who die) with reference to plants—i.e., Job 14:8, John 12:24; and Jude 12—see, for example, James Stambaugh, “Whence Cometh Death? A Biblical Theology of Physical Death and Natural Evil,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, Ariz.: Master Books, 2008), 374–80. The issue of whether plant cells “died” when they were eaten before the Fall is a modern issue, not one dealt with by the biblical account. It is possible, however, that the creation account makes a distinction between the edible plants mentioned in Genesis 1 and 2 and the “herb of the field” that was cultivated after sin (Gen. 2:5; 3:18), the first being those plants from which fruit (or other parts of the plant) could be eaten while the plant itself continued to grow (i.e., our fruits, grains, nuts, and some vegetables) and the second being the plants whose eating necessitated the termination of the growth of the plant itself (i.e., many of our vegetables).

170. Jacques B. Doukhan, “Where Did Death Come From? A Study in the Genesis Creation Story,” *Adventist Perspectives* 4, no. 1 (1990): 16–18.

abuse or cruelty.¹⁷¹ The text explicitly suggests that animal or human death and suffering are not a part of the original creation situation, as it indicates the diet prescribed for both humans and animals to be the products of plants, not animals (vv. 28–30). This peaceful harmony is also evident in Genesis 2, where animals are brought by God to the man to be named by him, thus implying companionship (albeit incomplete and inadequate) of the animals with humans (v. 18).

A second indicator that death is not part of the picture in Genesis 1 and 2 is the statement in Genesis 2:4b–6 that at the time of creation the world was “not yet” affected by anything not good. Younker has shown that the four things that were not yet in existence all came into the world as a result of sin: “(1) the need to deal with thorny plants, (2) the annual uncertainty and hard work of the grain crop, (3) the need to undertake the physically demanding plowing of the ground, and (4) the dependence on the uncertain, but essential, life-giving rain.”¹⁷² Doukhan points to a number of other terms in the Genesis creation narratives that constitute a prolepsis—the use of a descriptive word in anticipation of its being applicable—showing what is not yet but will come. Allusions to death and evil, which are not yet, may be found in the reference to “dust” (Gen. 2:7; to which humans will return in death; cf. 3:19); the mention of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17, in anticipation of the confrontation with and experiencing of evil; cf. 3:2–6, 22); the human’s task to “guard” (*šāmar*) the garden (Gen. 2:15, implying the risk of losing it; cf. 3:23, where they are expelled and the cherubim “guard” (*šāmar*) its entrance); and the play on words between “naked” and “cunning” (Gen. 2:25; 3:1; cf. 3:7, the nakedness resulting from sin).¹⁷³ Though alluded to by prolepsis, the negative or “not good” conditions, including death, are not yet.

A third indicator that death was not a reality prior to sin nor what God intended as part of the divine plan is that Genesis 3 portrays death as an accident, a surprise, which turns the original picture of peace and harmony (Gen. 1, 2) into conflict. Within Genesis 3, after the Fall, we have all of the harmonious relationships described in Genesis 1 and 2 disrupted: between man and himself

171. See Ps. 68:28; 2 Chron. 2:10; Isa. 41:2. It is clear that no cruelty is implied in this term, because when one is said to have dominion with cruelty, the term “with cruelty” is added (Lev. 25:43, 46, 53).

172. Younker, “Genesis 2,” 76, 77.

173. Doukhan, “Where Did Death Come From?,” 17.

(guilt, a recognition of “soul nakedness” that cannot be covered by externals, 3:7–10); between humans and God (fear, 3:10); between man and woman (blame or discord, 3:12, 13, 16, 17); between humans and animals (deceit and conflict, 3:1, 13, 15); and between humans and nature (decay, 3:17–19). Now death appears immediately (as an animal must die to provide covering for the humans’ nakedness, 3:21) and irrevocably (for the humans who have sinned, 3:19). The upset of the ecological balance is directly attributed to the humans’ sin (3:17, 18). The blessing of Genesis 1 and 2 has become the curse (3:14, 17).

Tryggve N. D. Mettinger points to the strong contrast regarding death before sin or guilt between the ANE accounts of theodicy and the Eden narrative in Genesis 2 and 3:

What we have in Mesopotamia is a type of theodicy in which death is not the result of human guilt but is the way that the gods arranged human existence. . . . On the other hand, what we have in the Eden Narrative is a theodicy that derives the anomalous phenomena from human guilt. Death is not what God intended but is the result of human sin.¹⁷⁴

A number of commentators have pointed out that one of the major reasons for God’s judgment upon the antediluvian world with the Flood was the existence of violence on the earth: “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence [ḥāmās]” (Gen. 6:11). This condition of the earth being “filled with violence [ḥāmās]” is repeated again in verse 13. The use of the term ḥāmās undoubtedly includes the presence of brutality and physical violence and, with its subject being “the earth,” probably refers to the violent behavior of both humans and animals (note the post-Flood decrees that attempt to limit both human and animal violence, Gen. 9:4–6). Divine judgment upon the earth for its violence (ḥāmās) implies that predation, which presupposes violence, and death, the all-too-frequent result of violence, were not part of the creation order.

Intertextual allusions to Genesis 1 and 2 later in Genesis confirm that death is an intruder, the result of sin and a consequence the Fall. Doukhan points to the striking intertextual parallels between Genesis 1:28–30 and 9:1–4, where God repeats to Noah the same blessing

174. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 2–3* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 133.

as to Adam, using the same terms and in the same order. But after the Fall, instead of peaceful dominion (as in creation), there will be fear and dread of humans by the animals, and instead of a vegetarian diet for both humans and animals (as in creation), humans are allowed to hunt and eat animals. The juxtaposing of these two passages reveals that the portrayal of conflict and death is not regarded as original in creation but organically connected to humanity's fall.

Perhaps the most instructive intertextual allusions to Genesis 1 and 2 occur in the Old Testament Hebrew prophets and in the last prophet of the New Testament (the book of Revelation); these messengers of God were inspired to look beyond the present to a future time of salvation, pictured as a re-creation of the world as it was before the Fall. This portrait, drawn largely in the language of a return to the Edenic state, explicitly describes a new/renewed creation of perfect harmony between humanity and nature, where once again predation and death will not exist:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze;
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole,
And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:6–9)

He will swallow up death forever,
And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces;
The rebuke of His people
He will take away from all the earth;
For the LORD has spoken. (Isa. 25:8)

I will ransom them from the power of the grave;
I will redeem them from death.
O Death, I will be your plagues!
O Grave, I will be your destruction! (Hos. 13:14)

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;
And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. (Isa. 65:17)

“For as the new heavens and the new earth
Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD,
“So shall your descendants and your name remain.” (Isa. 66:22)

I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.
Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. (Rev. 1:18)

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:14)

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the
first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea . . . And God
will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more
death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the
former things have passed away. (Rev. 21:1, 4)¹⁷⁵

175. For recent studies of these and related passages, discussing the return to the Genesis 1 and 2 paradise without death, see especially several chapters in William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr., eds., *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000). For example, Gene M. Tucker, “The Peaceable Kingdom and a Covenant with the Wild Animals,” 215–25, discusses Isaiah 11:6–9 and Hosea 2:18 (2:20); note his statement regarding Isaiah 11 on p. 216: “The text presumes a negative evaluation of the world as it is, filled with predators and prey, violence and death. One implication of the passage, to put it bluntly, is that there will be a time when the world will be made safe for domestic animals and children.” Again, David L. Bartlett, “Creation Waits with Eager Longing,” 229–50, deals with such Pauline passages as 1 Cor. 15:20–28; 2 Cor. 5:16–21; Gal. 5:1–6; Rom. 5:12–14; and 8:18–25. Note his comment on the last mentioned passage (243, 44): “Again this is a reading of the Genesis story in light of Paul’s questions. . . . Creation before Adam’s disobedience was not subject to bondage, to futility, to decay; it was free, purposeful, spared the threats of mortality. . . . The lost good of creation is (will be) restored purer and brighter than before.” A final chapter by John T. Carroll, “Creation and Apocalypse,” 251–60, discusses the new creation and paradise restored in the book of Revelation. Note his reference to the end of death (255): “John’s visionary excursion to the eschatological Jerusalem is in important respects a return to Paradise. The ‘new heaven and new earth’ fashioned by God who ‘makes all things new’ (Rev 21:1, 5, echoing Isa 43:19; 65:17; 66:22) still works with the raw materials of the old cosmos. The new creation improves the old but does not substitute one cosmos for another. . . . Several features of the old order are conspicuous by their absence. Death will no longer exist (and with it, crying or pain: Rev 21:2), a reality symbolized by the presence of the tree and water of life.”

Other contemporary theologians refer to these passages to undergird their conclusion that the “new creation” will return to a state without death. See, for example, John Polkinghorne, *The God of Hope and the End of the World* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002), 62, 63: “We are even told that at this great feast [at the end of the world] God will ‘swallow up death for ever’ (Isaiah 25:8).” Again, on p. 115: “Yet it seems a coherent hope to believe that the laws of its nature [the new creation] will be perfectly adapted to the everlasting life of that world where ‘Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away’ (Revelation 21:4).” As a last sample (123): “If that is the case, lionhood will have also to share in the dialectic of eschatological continuity and discontinuity, in accordance with the prophet vision that in

Several studies have carefully examined these and other relevant biblical passages and concluded that “God created the world without the presence of death, pain, and suffering” and that “the ‘subjection to futility’ spoken of in Romans 8:19–21 began in Genesis 3, not in Genesis 1.”¹⁷⁶

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE WHAT OF CREATION

There are numerous other issues related to the what of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, which have been dealt with elsewhere or call for further attention in another venue, and can only be listed here. These include, among others:

The firmament or expanse: The Hebrew word *rāqîaʿ* in Genesis 1 does not refer to a “metallic, hemispherical vault,” as many have maintained,¹⁷⁷ based upon what is now recognized as a mistranslation of the parallel ANE creation story *Enuma Elish*, but is best translated as “expanse” in all of its usages and has reference to the sky in Genesis 1. The mention of God’s placement of the greater light and the lesser light in the *rāqîaʿ* does not betray a wholesale acceptance of ANE cosmology on the part of the biblical writer, as often claimed. Rather, the account of Genesis 1 and 2 seems to provide a polemic against major parts of ANE cosmology. The “waters above” refer to the upper atmospheric waters contained in the clouds.¹⁷⁸

Creation “according to its kind”: The phrase “according to its kind” (*mîn*) in Genesis 1 (vv. 11, 12, 21, 24, 25) does not imply a fixity of species (as Darwin and many others have claimed); rather, *mîn* “refers to a ‘multiplicity’ of animals and denotes boundaries between basic kinds of animals but is not linked directly to reproduction.”¹⁷⁹

the ‘new heavens and the new earth . . . the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox’ (Isaiah 65:17 and 25).”

176. Stambaugh, “Whence Cometh Death?,” 397. See also Doukhan’s chapter in this volume.

177. See, for example, Bull and Guy, *God, Sky and Land*, 55–58, 60–77, 115–117, and sources cited therein. They summarize their discussion of this term: “For the concrete Hebrew mind of three millennia ago it was relatively easy to picture a metallic, hemispherical vault that ‘separated the water under the vault from the water above the vault’ (1:7). . . . There was a vault separating the waters of chaos above the vault from the waters below the vault” (76).

178. For discussion of this whole issue, see Younker and Davidson, “The Myth of the Solid Heavenly Dome,” 125–47 (reprinted in this volume as chapter 2).

179. A. Rahel Schafer, “The ‘Kinds’ of Genesis 1: What is the Meaning of *mîn*?” *JATS* 14, no. 1 (2003): 86–100, esp. 97.

Imago Dei (Image of God): Humankind is made in the image (*selem*) of God, after His likeness (*dēmūt*) (Gen. 1:26, 27), which includes, among other considerations, the relational aspects of humanity as in the Godhead, the representation in humanity of the presence of God, and the resemblance of humans to God in both outward form and inward character.¹⁸⁰

Equality of man and woman: The Genesis creation accounts (Gen. 1, 2) present the equality of the man and woman without hierarchy before the Fall and present this as the ideal, even in a sinful world.¹⁸¹

Marriage: The Genesis creation accounts present a succinct theology of marriage (concentrated in the three expressions “leave,” “be joined to,” “become one flesh” in Gen. 2:24).¹⁸²

Earth’s first sanctuary: The Garden of Eden is portrayed as a sanctuary-temple, with Adam and Eve as the priestly officiants.¹⁸³

Creation care: A robust theology of creation care (environmental concerns) emerges from a careful study of Genesis 1 and 2.¹⁸⁴

The Sabbath: The Sabbath is set forth in Genesis 2:1–3 as a holy institution rooted in, and a memorial of, the six-day creation.¹⁸⁵

180. For an overview of seven aspects of the *imago Dei* implied by the text and its context, see Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Anthropology and the Old Testament” (paper presented at the Third International Bible Conference, Jerusalem, Israel, June 16, 2012), 2–17; id., *Flame of Yahweh*, 22, 23, 35–37 (including the numerous bibliographical references in footnotes); see also W. Sibley Towner, “Clones of God: Genesis 1:26–28 and the Image of God in the Hebrew Bible,” *Int* 59, no. 4 (October 2005): 341–56; and Stephen L. Herring, “A ‘Transubstantiated’ Humanity: The Relationship between the Divine Image and the Presence of God in Genesis 1 26f.,” *VT* 58 (2008): 480–94.

181. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 22–35 (and the bibliographical references in the footnotes).

182. *Ibid.*, 42–48.

183. Davidson, “Cosmic Metanarrative,” 108–11; id., *Flame of Yahweh*, 47, 48; and the numerous sources cited in footnotes.

184. See, for example, Jo Ann Davidson, “Creator, Creation, and Church: Restoring Ecology to Theology,” *AUSS* 45, no. 1 (2007): 101–22; see id., *Needed: A More “Worldly” Attitude: Restoring Ecology to Theology* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, forthcoming). For further discussion and bibliography, see Michael B. Barkey, ed., *Environmental Stewardship in the Judeo-Christian Tradition: Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant Wisdom on the Environment* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Acton Institute, 2000); and Colin Russell, *The Earth, Humanity, and God* (London: University College of London Press, 1994).

185. See especially Mathilde Frey, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch: An Exegetical and Theological Study” (PhD diss., Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2011), 14–72. See H. Ross Cole, “The Sabbath and Genesis 2:1–3,” *AUSS* 41.1 (2003): 5–12; Richard M. Davidson, *A Love Song for the Sabbath* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 1988); Norman R. Gullely, “Basic Issues Between Science and Scripture: Theological Implications of Alternative Models and the Necessary Basis for the Sabbath in Genesis 1–2,” *JATS* 14, no. 1 (2003): 195–228; Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald,

CONCLUSION

The remainder of Scripture takes up these and other creation-related themes. This profound theology of creation at the beginning of the Bible, developed throughout the biblical canon, calls for us, God's creatures, to praise and worship Him for His wondrous creative works: "Praise the LORD . . . Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them" (Ps. 146:1, 6); "worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water" (Rev. 14:7)!