

GENESIS 1 – 3: CREATION AND THE FALL¹

By Ashby L. Camp

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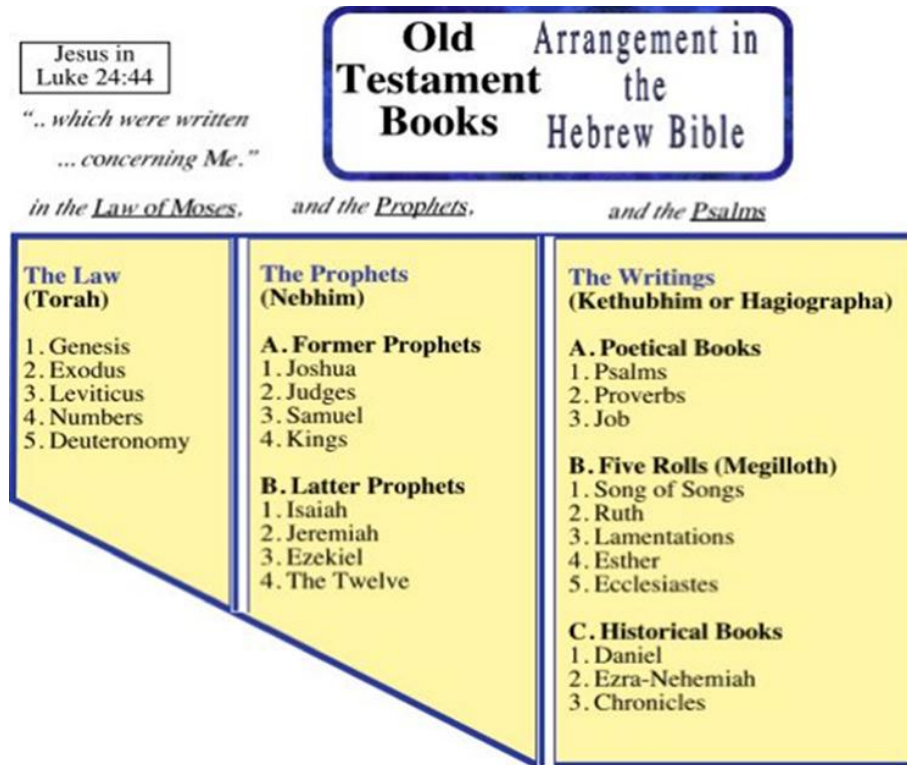
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¹ This paper incorporates material from some of my previous writings.

I. Introduction

A. The Hebrew Bible has all the same books as our Old Testament, but they are grouped and ordered differently, as shown in this diagram.



B. As in our Bibles, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These are known collectively as the Law (Torah in Hebrew) and also as the Pentateuch, the latter deriving from the Greek *pentateuchos*, which literally means five vessels or jars, each presumably being used as a container for a scroll.²

C. Early Jewish and Christian tradition is virtually unanimous in attributing these five books to Moses.³ Jesus affirms that connection in Lk. 24:44, where he says, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in *the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms* must be fulfilled." He is almost certainly referring to the entirety of the Hebrew scriptures in terms of their traditional three-fold Jewish division into the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, with Psalms representing the Writings, and therefore he is accepting the consensus that the Law, the first five books, were written by Moses by calling it

² Karel van der Toorn, *Israelite Religion: From Tribal Beginnings to Scribal Legacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2025), 332 (fn. 73).

³ Michael A. Grisanti, "The Pentateuch" in Eugene H. Merrill, Mark F. Rooker, and Michael A. Grisanti, eds., *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2011), 166; Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 39.

"the Law of Moses."⁴ Many other places in the New Testament recognize Moses as the author of the Pentateuch.⁵

D. Since Moses died in 1406 B.C., right before Israel's entrance into the Promised Land, Genesis was written by him in the latter part of the 15th century B.C., centuries after the lives of the patriarchs reported in Genesis and millennia after the creation events we will be studying.⁶ That makes it different from the rest of the Pentateuch, Exodus – Deuteronomy. I think Michael Grisanti's comments are helpful in that regard:

Moses was the substantial author of the book of Genesis as well as the Pentateuch. This does not rule out the possibility that Moses could have drawn on oral traditions or existing written records (in addition to direct revelation) for his composition of the book of Genesis; whatever he included in the book of Genesis is part of the inspired text of Scripture and is infallible and inerrant.⁷

E. Nor does Moses being the substantial author mean there were no later inspired editors who had a hand in putting the book into its final canonical form. We know, for example, that certain geographical references were updated to accord with how those places were later known. Tremper Longman provides two examples:

While Ur is an ancient city predating Moses, the reference to Ur of the Chaldeans (see Genesis 11:31) is a *postmosaica* since the Chaldeans were an Aramaic-speaking tribe that lived in the first millennium BC, long after the death of Moses.

In Genesis 14:14 the narrator reports that Abram chased the four ancient Near Eastern kings who kidnapped Lot "as far as Dan." This reference to the city of Dan is a *postmosaica* because this city, earlier called Laish, was not named Dan until the time of the Judges (see Judges 18), and of course the name derived from the tribe of Dan, named after Jacob's son Dan, Abraham's great grandson.⁸

F. "The English title 'Genesis' is derived from Jerome's Vulgate, *Liber Genesis*. This Latin name followed the Greek (Septuagint) title, which probably was taken from Gen. 2:4a where a form (genitive plural) of *genesis* ("source, birth, generation") renders the Hebrew *tôlêdôt*. The title reflects the content of the book whose macrostructure is marked by the recurring *tôlêdôt* formula."⁹ Ancient Jews and Christians did not doubt that Genesis is inspired by God and therefore rightly included as Scripture. Grisanti states, "No extant Christian or Jewish source has ever raised questions about the legitimacy of the canonicity of Genesis."¹⁰

⁴ According to Craig A. Evans, *The Bible Background Knowledge Commentary: Matthew – Luke* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2003), 526, it is "undisputed" that the Law of Moses in Lk. 24:44 refers to the Pentateuch.

⁵ See, e.g., Andrew E. Steinmann, *Genesis*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019), 4.

⁶ See, Ashby L. Camp, "[Archaeology and the Bible](#)," 4-5.

⁷ Grisanti, "The Pentateuch" (2011), 172.

⁸ Tremper Longman III, "[Who wrote the book of Genesis?](#)" (August 31, 2018).

⁹ Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 41.

¹⁰ Michael A. Grisanti, "Genesis" in Eugene H. Merrill, Mark F. Rooker, and Michael A. Grisanti, eds., *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2011), 171.

G. Regarding the genre of Gen. 1:1-2:3, a text we will explore in some detail, Steven Boyd, a professor of Old Testament and Semitic languages, developed and published a highly accurate model for distinguishing poetry from narrative in the Hebrew Bible. It revealed "that the probability that Genesis 1:1-2:3 is narrative is between .999942 and .999987 at a 99.5 percent confidence level." He concludes, "therefore that *it is statistically indefensible to argue that this text is poetry.*"¹¹ After exploring the perspective that biblical authors generally have toward the events to which they refer in their narrative, Boyd concluded that the evidence "makes it clear that the authors of these narratives believed that they were referring to real events. That is, narratives are historical narratives."¹² Not surprisingly, he concludes that Gen. 1:1-2:3 should be read accordingly, "as a realistic portrayal of events." That is how I read it.

II. Chapter One

A. 1:1 – Summary title of following creation report

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

1. Genesis 1:1 is traditionally understood as an *independent* temporal clause and is therefore translated as a complete sentence: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." That is how it is rendered in virtually all the standard English versions, the NEB, NRSV, and NJPS being notable exceptions. Interestingly, when the NEB was revised in 1989 as the REB, Gen. 1:1 was changed to the traditional rendering. I think that is the correct translation.¹³

2. The phrase "the heavens and the earth" (*haššāmayim wə'ēt hā'āreš*) in v. 1 is almost certainly an expression known as a merism that means the totality of creation.¹⁴ When, for

¹¹ Steve W. Boyd, "The Genre of Genesis 1:1-2:3: What Means This Text?" in Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, eds., *Coming to Grips with Genesis* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008), 176.

¹² Boyd (2008), 184.

¹³ For a technical defense of the traditional rendering, see Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 103-107; John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebel (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 21-23; and Mathews (1996), 136-139.

¹⁴ This is recognized across a broad theological spectrum. See, for example, C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. by James Martin (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, [1886 reprint] 2006), 1:29; John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910), 14; E. J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1964), 9; Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 2:104; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, rev. ed., trans. John H. Marks (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 48; R. K. Harrison, "Creation," in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. M. C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975) 1:1022; Bruce K. Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 - Part III: The Initial Chaos Theory and the Precreation Chaos Theory," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132 (July 1975), 218; Claus Westermann, *Genesis I-II*, trans. John J. Scullion, A Continental Commentary, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 101; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 15; Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 106; Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 5; Hamilton (1990), 103 (n. 2); Sailhamer (1990), 23; John D. Currid, "An Examination of the Egyptian Background of the Genesis

example, we say, "I looked high and low," we do not mean we looked only high and low but that we looked everywhere, high, low, and everywhere in between. Robert Plummer states, "A merism is a figure of speech in which two elements together stand for the totality of something. For example, in Genesis 1:1 God is described as creating 'the heavens and the earth.' This expression is best understood as a merism for the entire created order."¹⁵

a. The Jewish scholar Nahum Sarna paraphrases the merism of v. 1 as "the totality of cosmic phenomena,"¹⁶ Douglas Kelly says it means "everything that exists,"¹⁷ Gerhard von Rad interprets it as "absolutely everything,"¹⁸ and Jacobus Erasmus concludes that it refers to "all things apart from God."¹⁹ John Sailhamer states:

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. Unlike English, Hebrew doesn't have a single word to express the concept of "the universe"; it must do so by means of a merism. The expression "sky and land" thus stands for the "entirety of the universe." It includes not only the two extremes, heaven and earth, but also all that they contain – the sun, the moon, and the stars; every seen and unseen part of the universe; the seas, the dry land, and the plants and animals that inhabit them.²⁰

b. Douglas Moo and Jonathan Moo state:

What is in any case clear in Genesis 1:1 is that all that exists is the product of God's creative activity. The expression "heavens and the earth" (or "sky and the land" as we might translate it) is a merism, two contrasting parts that are used to refer to the whole. Here at the beginning of the creation account, then, is a summary of the rest of the chapter: God is the one who created the whole of the universe, which entails all that exists.

This first sentence of Scripture therefore divides all of reality into God and everything else. There is God, and then there is the world that he made. There is the Creator, and then there is his creation.²¹

3. So everything that exists other than God was created by God "in the beginning." And since God creates, brings new things into existence, throughout the six days of

Cosmology," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 35 (1991), 31; Paul K. Jewett, *God Creation, and Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 457; Mathews (1996), 129; Douglas F. Kelly, *Creation and Change* (Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1997), 45, 79; Richard E. Averbeck, "A Literary Day, Inter-Textual, and Contextual Reading of Genesis 1-2," in J. Daryl Charles, ed., *Reading Genesis 1-2: An Evangelical Conversation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2013), 10; John W. Hilber, *Old Testament Cosmology and Divine Accommodation* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2020), 176.

¹⁵ Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2021), 228.

¹⁶ Sarna (1989), 5.

¹⁷ Kelly (1997), 45.

¹⁸ Von Rad (1972), 48.

¹⁹ Jacobus Erasmus, *The Kalām Cosmological Argument: A Reassessment* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2018), 23.

²⁰ John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1996), 56.

²¹ Douglas J. Moo and Jonathan A. Moo, *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 46.

creation as reported in 1:3-31, this "beginning" was not a moment or point in time prior to the creation week; it *was* the creation week. It was a *period* of time, the week at the start of the existence of the universe or reality in which we live.

a. Many scholars recognize that the Hebrew word for "beginning" (*reshit*) includes this sense of an initial period of time. John Walton, for example, states:

In Hebrew usage this adverb typically introduces a period of time rather than a point in time. We can most easily see this in Job 8:7, which speaks of the early part of Job's life, and Jeremiah 28:1, which refers to the beginning of Zedekiah's reign. This usage happens to correspond with ideas that are reflected in ancient Near Eastern creation texts. . . . All of this information leads us to conclude that the "beginning" is a way of talking about the seven-day *period* rather than a *point* in time prior to the seven days."²²

b. Longman states, "J. Walton (*Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011], 126-127) is correct to say that 'beginning' (*reshit*) does not refer to a moment of time but rather to 'a preliminary period of time,' a period of time that will be detailed in the following days of creation."²³

c. Andrew Steinmann states:

Key here is Walton's understanding of the first word in Genesis, Hebrew *berēshith* – traditionally translated "in the beginning" – as a period of time, not a point in time. Walton points out that when this word is used elsewhere (Jer 26:1; 27:1; 28:1; 49:34) it denotes not the first point of time in a sequence, but an initial period of time. This can be seen clearly at Jer 28:1 where "the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah" is more specifically defined as during the fifth month of his fourth year on the throne. (Zedekiah reigned for a decade).

Moreover, in accord with this, when the word *rēshith*, "first," is used of material items, it often means the first portion of something, not the very first example. For instance, it can refer to the first portion of the harvest, the firstfruits (Lev 2:10; 2 Chr 31:5). At Gen 10:10 it refers to the first cities that were part of Nimrod's kingdom.

Thus, Walton's contention that "in the beginning" (*berēshith*) means something like "in the initial period" is correct.²⁴

4. That "the beginning" during which everything was created (1:1) refers to the creation week is confirmed by 2:1, which declares, after the six days of creation, "*Thus* the heavens and the earth were *finished*, and all the host of them." It also is confirmed by the fact

²² John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 43.

²³ Tremper Longman III, *Genesis*, Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 34 (fn. 12).

²⁴ Andrew Steinmann, "[Lost World of Genesis One: John H. Walton, American Evangelicals and Creation](#)," *Lutheran Education Journal* (March 9, 2012).

that in Ex. 31:17 God himself declares that in six days he made "the heavens and the earth," the identical phrase in Gen. 1:1.²⁵ And it is further confirmed by the fact the Lord Jesus in Mk. 10:6 places the creation of mankind, which occurred on day six, in "the beginning."

5. Since "the beginning" of Gen. 1:1 refers to the creation week described in the remainder of the chapter, I agree with those scholars who assert that 1:1 is best understood as a heading or summary title for the creation work that is described in the following verses.²⁶ In other words, it does not describe a separate act of creation that precedes the creation week. Rather, it is an introductory encapsulation of the work that is subsequently spelled out.

a. Steven Boyd and his coauthors provide this simple illustration of an introductory encapsulation:

"Harry took his family on a great day trip. He drove them up the coast, explored a state park with them, treated them to a nice seafood dinner, and drove them back home tired but happy." This is a classic example of *introductory encapsulation* followed by *Elaboration* with the details. The *day trip* lasted all day. It did not conclude until he pulled into his garage. Within that time all the other eventualities occurred, which happen to be in sequential order.²⁷

b. In the quote already given, the Moos state, "Here at the beginning of the creation account, then, is a summary of the rest of the chapter: God is the one who created the whole of the universe, which entails all that exists."

c. Walton states:

If the "beginning" refers to the seven-day period rather than to a point in time before the seven-day period, then we conclude that the first verse does not record a separate act of creation that occurred prior to the seven days – but that in fact the creation that it refers to is recounted in the seven days. This suggests that verse 1 serves as a literary introduction to the rest of the chapter.²⁸

d. Iain Duguid states: "What this means is that 'in the beginning' in Genesis 1:1 refers not to a time prior to creation but rather to the initial six days of creation, as a summary heading; the rest of the chapter lays out the development of God's initial purpose in the ordering of space and time."²⁹

²⁵ Ex. 20:11 is similar, but since it has the additional phrase "the sea, and all that is in them," the parallel is less exact. But contra Sailhamer (1996), 106-107, the tripartite expression, "heaven-earth-sea(s)," simply is an alternate way of "referring to the entire universe." David Toshio Tsumura, "מְקוֹם" in Willem A. VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 4:160.

²⁶ These include Umberto Cassuto, Gerhard von Rad, Bruce Waltke, Claus Westermann, Allen Ross, Victor Hamilton, John Hartley, John Walton, Richard Averbeck, Michael LeFebvre, John Hilber, and Iain Duguid.

²⁷ Steven W. Boyd, et al., "Adjusting Our Heading: Delineating the New Approach" in Steven W. Boyd and Andrew A. Snelling, eds., *Grappling with the Chronology of the Flood* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2014), 58.

²⁸ Walton (2009), 43-44.

²⁹ Iain Duguid, "Genesis" in Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Skar, eds., *ESV Expository Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2025), 1:41.

6. Some object to understanding verse 1 as a summary title or introductory encapsulation instead of an act of creation because there is then no assertion or description of creation prior to mention of the material in v. 2, the "earth to be" that God in vv. 3-31 fashions by his word into the universe of human habitation.

a. The concern is that this suggests, or at least leaves open the possibility, that the material of v. 2 was not created by God but was eternal, which would mean that God did not create all things, contrary to texts that declare otherwise (Isa. 66:1-2, Jn. 1:3, Rom. 4:17 [possibly], 11:36, 1 Cor. 8:6, Eph. 3:9, Col. 1:16, Heb. 2:10, 11:3, and Rev. 4:11). It is true that under this view the origin of the material of v. 2 is not described, but the text *implies* it was created by God during the creation week by the all-encompassing nature of the merism. In declaring that in the beginning God created "the heavens and the earth," Moses declares that God created absolutely everything, all things apart from himself, during the creation week. That leaves no room for eternal or uncreated matter, even if its origin is not described.

b. Thus, Keil and Delitzsch state that in Gen. 1:1 "the existence of any primeval material is precluded by the object created: 'the heavens and the earth.' . . . [I]f in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, 'there is nothing belonging to the composition of the universe, either in material or form, which had an existence out of God prior to this divine act in the beginning' (Delitzsch)."³⁰ Grudem writes, "[Creation *ex nihilo*] means that before God began to create the universe, nothing else existed except God himself. This is the implication of Genesis 1:1, which says, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' The phrase 'the heavens and the earth' includes the entire universe."³¹ Duguid states, "[T]he combination 'heaven and earth' functions as a merism, so together these terms include everything that exists, implying that *ex nihilo* doctrine."³² Copan writes, "The fact that 'heaven and earth' is a merism signifying 'the totality of cosmic phenomena' points us toward an absolute beginning of the universe – including matter."³³

7. The actual description of God's creative work begins in v. 3 with his engaging the material of v. 2 to transform it into the world and universe that we know. Perhaps God revealed his creation work to Moses without announcing his creation of the initial state because pagan creation myths of Moses' day depicted various gods fashioning preexisting material into the cosmos. They did not assert that some other god made that material. Those stories were false, of course, corruptions of what God had previously revealed about his creating, but they had an element of truth in that God did fashion the cosmos from an unorganized state of material. Rather than proclaim that he created that initial state of material, he left that as an inference and took up the contrast where the pagan stories began, with the shaping of existing material. He emphasized that *he*, not some pagan god, was the one who fashioned that material into the cosmos and that he did so in a way different from what was claimed in the pagan myths.

³⁰ Keil and Delitzsch (2006), 47.

³¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 262-263.

³² Duguid (2025), 1:41.

³³ Paul Copan, "Is *Creatio Ex Nihilo* A Post-Biblical Invention? An Examination of Gerhard May's Proposal," *Trinity Journal* 17:1 (spring 1996), 88 (n. 51).

8. The verb translated "created" in Gen. 1:1 is *bārā'*. It is sometimes claimed that this verb demonstrates that the creation in question was out of nothing, but that is more weight than the word can bear. Indeed, it is used of the creation of mankind (male and female) in Gen. 1:27, which Gen. 2:7, 22 reveal employed existing material.³⁴ Bill Arnold cautions:

The creative action that God takes in v. 1 is the verb *bārā'*, which is regularly overloaded with theological content by commentators of this text. Routinely, exegetes aver that Israel's God is the only subject of this verb in the Hebrew Bible and that its accusative is always of product and never of material. Various theological conclusions are often drawn from these observations, including *creatio ex nihilo*, and God's sovereignty and power in creating effortlessly. These concepts are present in Gen 1, or in the case of creation without the use of preexistent matter, are at least compatible with the passage and asserted elsewhere in Scripture (Pss 33:6; 148:5). However, this is entirely too much for our little verb to bear.³⁵

9. The word for God used in 1:1-2:3 is *Elohim*. Kenneth Mathews comments:

The Hebrew Bible has three names for "deity" or "god/God": *El*, *Eloah*, and *Elohim*. The etymological relationship of these words, if any, is unclear. Of these, *Elohim* occurs by far the most often in the Bible (2,750x). As a plural in form, it can refer to pagan deities, in which case it is translated "gods" (e.g., Exod 12:12; 20:3), or to the God of Israel. When used of the one God, it commonly occurs in the Hebrew with singular verbs as it is found here. Why the plural was used of the one God of Israel is uncertain, though most ascribe it to the use of the Hebrew plural that indicates honor or majesty. As a plural it is a literary convention that reflects special reverence.³⁶

B. 1:2 – The state of the "earth to be" as initially created

² Now the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

1. In its initial state, the "proto earth" was covered by water of unspecified depth, perhaps being inside a gigantic ball of water. Therefore, it was formless in the sense of having no definition, no features. It also was empty, meaning uninhabited by living things, and was shrouded in darkness. God's intention to transform that initial state is reflected in the fact his Spirit was hovering over the surface of the waters. Peter says in 2 Pet. 3:5 that the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God.

2. Some commentators view the state described in v. 2 as something ominous and wrong, a "chaos" that is contrary to God's good creation and thus reject the implication of 1:1

³⁴ See, Terry Mortenson, "[Understanding Genesis 1 Hebrew: Create \(*bara*\) & Make \(*asah*\)](#)" (August 15, 2007).

³⁵ Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, NCB (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 36.

³⁶ Mathews (1996), 127.

that the earth as described in v. 2 was created by God. But that restricts unduly the scope of the merism "the heavens and the earth," which encompasses everything, and it also reads into v. 2 a dubious negativity.

a. David Tsumura writes:

Let us summarize what we have concluded in the above discussion: the term *tōhû* means (1) "desert," (2) "a desert-like place," i.e., "a desolate or empty place" or "an uninhabited place" or (3) "emptiness"; the phrase *tōhû wābōhu* has a similar meaning and refers to a state of "aridness or unproductiveness" (Jer 4:23) or "desolation" (Isa 34:11). . . .

In light of the above, it would be very reasonable to understand the phrase *tōhû wābōhu* in Gen. 1:2 as also describing a state of "unproductiveness and emptiness," though the context suggests that this was the initial state of the created earth rather than a state brought about as a result of God's judgment on the earth or land (cf. Jer. 4:23; Isa 34:11). . . .

In conclusion, both the biblical context and extra-biblical parallels suggest that the phrase *tōhû wābōhu* in Gen. 1:2 has nothing to do with "chaos" and simply means "emptiness" and refers to the earth which is an empty place, i.e. "an unproductive and uninhabited place." Thus, the main reason for the author's mentioning the earth as *tōhû wābōhu* in this setting is to inform the audience that the earth is "not yet" the earth as it was known to them.³⁷

b. Similarly, Mathews writes:

The description of the "earth" [in v. 2] is best seen as neutral, if not positive; for elsewhere we learn that God is the Creator of "darkness" (Isa 45:7), and we recognize also that darkness ("evening") was part of the created order the Lord named and deemed "good." As we showed at v. 2, the distinctive couplet *tōhû wābōhu* ("formless and empty") portrays an earth that is a sterile wasteland awaiting the creative word of God to make it habitable for human life. This is the point of the prophet's appeal to creation: "he did not create it [the land] to be empty [*tōhû*]" (Isa 45:18). In his oracle Isaiah anticipated that the uninhabited Israel will once again know the return of the exilic captives, and, spiritually, the Gentiles who submit to the God of Israel will join Israel in its salvation (Isa 45:14-25). The passage speaks to the purposes of God, who as Creator will achieve his salvific ends for all people. This is borne out by the term parallel to *tōhû* in v. 18, which shows purpose, "but formed it [the land] to be inhabited." Thus the prophet asserted that the Lord did not create the earth to remain *tōhû* but rather to become a residence for man. Finally, the three parallel clauses in v. 2's description of the "earth" include the "Spirit of God," who prepares the earth for the creative commands to follow. This suggests that the earth's elements are not

³⁷ David Toshio Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 83 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 41, 43.

portraying a negative picture but rather a neutral, sterile landscape created by God and subject to his protection.³⁸

3. As I have noted, it is implied that God brought this initial state into being, but nothing is said about how he did so. But since absolutely everything ("the heavens and the earth") was created "in the beginning," during the creation week, this initial state was created from nothing during that time. It could not have been created before then.

C. 1:3-5 – Creation of daytime and nighttime, first day

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

1. The actual description of God's creation work begins in v. 3, as he starts to fashion the formless and empty earth into the universe of human habitation. God speaks light into existence and then in vv. 4-5 creates the phenomenon of day and night, daytime and nighttime, which is the most basic rhythm of human experience. From this description, it seems that light as God first created it illuminated all the still submerged earth, meaning it came from all directions, and then, to create the phenomenon of day and night, he localized the source of the light so that it shone on earth from only one direction, and he started the earth rotating so that the surface would experience alternating times of light and darkness, what we know as day and night.

2. Some balk at the idea of light and the phenomenon of day and night existing before creation of the heavenly bodies, but just as the eschatological light will not have its source in the sun or moon (e.g., Rev. 21:23, 22:5), neither did the light of creation. Victor Hamilton writes:

It will perhaps strike the reader of this story as unusual that its author affirms the existence of light (and a day for that matter) without the existence of the sun, which is still three "days" away. The creation of light anticipates the creation of sunlight. Eventually the task of separating the light from the darkness will be assigned to the heavenly luminaries (v. 18). It is unnecessary to explain such a claim as reflecting scientific ignorance. What the author states is that God caused the light to shine from a source other than the sun for the first three "days."³⁹

3. Verse 5 ends with the refrain, "And there was evening and there was morning," and then says either "the first day" or "one day."

a. Unlike the numbers given for the other days, the number used in v. 5 is a cardinal rather than an ordinal number. In other words, it means "one" instead of "first." That is

³⁸ Mathews (1996), 143.

³⁹ Hamilton (1990), 121.

why the phrase is rendered "one day" in ERV, ASV, RSV, NAS, NASU, and CSB. If that is the correct meaning here, then Moses defined a "day" by specifying that a day and night – there was evening and there was morning – together constitute "one day." The identical phrase (*yôm 'eḥād*) is used three other times in the Pentateuch (Gen. 27:45, 33:13; Num. 11:19), where it means a single ordinary day.

b. Most English versions, however, render this cardinal number (one) as an ordinal number (first) because it can have that meaning in a series like this. So I am reluctant to press the point that Moses in v. 5 expressly defined a day.

4. But even if Moses did not specify in v. 5 that a day consisted of a combined period of a day and a night, the evidence is overwhelming that "day" in v. 5 and in the other days of creation is a normal day with which his readers were familiar, a day of 24 hours. This is recognized by many leading Old Testament scholars, though some of them deny that this means creation actually occurred over six literal days, either by claiming the literal days are part of a literary scheme that makes a larger figurative point⁴⁰ or claiming the Bible is simply in error. I will quote only five of them.

a. Marcus Dods wrote at the end of the 19th century, "They are [the Bible's] worst friends who distort its words that they may yield a meaning more in accordance with scientific truth. If, for example, the word 'day' in these chapters does not mean a period of twenty-four hours, the interpretation of Scripture is hopeless."⁴¹

b. Wenham declares, "There can be little doubt that here [v. 5] 'day' has its basic sense of a 24-hour period."⁴²

c. Ross writes, "In this chapter, however, ['day'] must carry its normal meaning. . . . It seems inescapable that Genesis presents the creation in six days."⁴³

d. John Stek writes:

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 aeons of time. His language is

⁴⁰ Two notable examples are the "framework theory" and the "analogical-days" view (also called the "anthropomorphic-days" view). For a thorough critique of the former, see Robert V. McCabe, "[A Critique of the Framework Interpretation of the Creation Account \(Part 1\)](#)," *Answers in Depth* (June 6, 2007) and Robert V. McCabe, "[A Critique of the Framework Interpretation of the Creation Account \(Part 2\)](#)," *Answers in Depth* (June 13, 2007). Regarding the latter, see the critique in Ashby L. Camp, "[A Reply to Bruce Gordon's Biblical Critique of Young-Earth Creationism](#)," *Answers Research Journal* 8 (2015), 49-52.

⁴¹ Marcus Dods, *The Book of Genesis* (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1898), 4.

⁴² Wenham (1987), 19.

⁴³ Ross (1988), 109.

plain and simple, and he speaks in plain and simple terms of one of the most common elements in humanity's experience of the world.⁴⁴

e. And, finally, Walton writes:

We cannot be content to ask, "Can the word [*yôm*] 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.⁴⁵

f. In addition, the premier Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon lists Gen. 1:5 as the first entry under the definition "day of twenty-four hours."⁴⁶ And Saeboe, in the acclaimed *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, includes *yôm* in Gen. 1:5 as referring to a "full day" of twenty-four hours.⁴⁷

5. Here is how Kenneth Keathley and Mark Rooker sketch the evidence that the days of the creation account are normal days.

In Genesis 1 the creation days are referenced with a number to refer to each successive day of the creation week (1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). Elsewhere in Scripture when the word "day" (*yom*) is used with a number, it always refers to a twenty-four-hour day. The same is true when the word occurs in the singular (day vs. days) and is not found within a compound grammatical construction, such as the object of a preposition or the object of an infinitive construct. Moreover, there are additional reasons from the context of Genesis 1 to suggest that the day is a normal twenty-four-hour period – specifically the employment of the formula "evening and morning" occurring with the six creation days (1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). The occurrence of the phrase "evening and morning" with or without the occurrence of the word "day," refers consistently to literal twenty-four-hour days in the Old Testament. . . .

A second line of support for understanding that literal twenty-four-hour days are in view in Genesis 1 has to do with the Sabbath law in the Ten Commandments. The law of the Sabbath requires man to work for six days during the week, but then rest on the seventh day (the Sabbath) from all his labors. The reason for this pattern according to the record of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 is that God worked six days and then rested, ceased from his labors, on the seventh day (Ex. 20:8-11). As humans [Israelites] are called to imitate God by

⁴⁴ John H. Stek, "What Says Scripture?" in Howard J. Van Till et al., eds., *Portraits of Creation: Biblical and Scientific Perspectives on the World's Formation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 237-238.

⁴⁵ John H. Walton, *Genesis*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 81.

⁴⁶ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (Boston: Brill, 2001), 1:399. Likewise, William H. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 130.

⁴⁷ Magne Saeboe "יֹמַי *yôm*" in G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 6:23.

this work pattern, it is understood that the model for the Sabbath is based on literal twenty-four-hour periods of time and the basis for this understanding comes from the use of days in Genesis 1. E. J. Young comments on the logic of this reasoning when he states, "In Ex. 20:11 the activity of God is presented to man as a pattern, and this fact presupposes that there was a reality in the activity of God which man is to follow. How could man be held accountable for working six days if God himself had not actually worked for six days?" Hence, the Ten Commandments take the word "day" as referring to twenty-four-hour periods within the weekly cycle, as God provided an example for mankind's labor.⁴⁸

6. The NET note to Gen. 1:5 states:

The exegetical evidence suggests the word "day" in this chapter refers to a literal twenty-four hour day. It is true that the word can refer to a longer period of time (see Isa 61:2, or the idiom in 2:4, "in the day," that is, "when"). But this chapter uses "day," "night," "morning," "evening," "years," and "seasons." Consistency would require sorting out how all these terms could be used to express ages. Also, when the Hebrew word יום (*yom*) is used with a numerical adjective, it refers to a literal day. Furthermore, the commandment to keep the sabbath clearly favors this interpretation. One is to work for six days and then rest on the seventh, just as God did when he worked at creation.

7. The overwhelming majority of early Christian leaders understood creation to have occurred over the course of six ordinary days. This includes men like Theophilus of Antioch, Methodius, Lactantius, Victorinus of Pettau, Ephrem the Syrian, Basil of Caesarea, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Ambrose of Milan. This was the standard view among Christians, as demonstrated by the fact Celsus, a pagan critic of Christianity in the late second century, ridiculed that understanding. It remained the consensus understanding for many centuries, beyond the time of the great Protestant Reformers.⁴⁹ As John Feinberg concludes, "Though at various times in church history some questioned whether the days of creation were literal solar days, the predominant view at least until the 1700s was that the days of creation were six twenty-four hour days."⁵⁰

8. Some people argue that the days of creation need not be regular days because 2 Pet. 3:8 says, "that with [the] Lord one day [is] like a thousand years and a thousand years [are] like one day" (see also, Ps. 90:4).

a. But as Todd Beall explains:

[P]assages such as Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 have little bearing on the discussion of *yôm* [day] in Genesis 1. In both texts a comparison is made: a thousand years in

⁴⁸ Kenneth D. Keathley and Mark F. Rooker, *40 Questions About Creation and Evolution* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 157-158.

⁴⁹ See, e.g., David W. Hall, "A Brief Overview of the Exegesis of Genesis 1-11: Luther to Lyell" in Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, eds., *Coming to Grips with Genesis* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008), 53-78.

⁵⁰ John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 597.

God's sight are *like* a day. In no case is it suggested that the actual word "day" really stands for a longer period of time. The point is that what might seem like a long time for us, given our limited life spans (specifically referenced in Ps. 90:10), is really not a very long time at all from the Lord's standpoint. In Genesis 1 there are no such comparative particles indicating a comparison. In fact, neither Psalm 90:4 nor 2 Peter 3:8 have anything to do with the days of the creation week.⁵¹

b. An anonymous writer likewise states:

Some who hold to old earth creationism use 2 Peter 3:8 to bolster their view that the "days" of Genesis 1 were not literal days but long eons of time. If "a day is like a thousand years," the reasoning goes, then the word *day* in the creation narrative cannot mean a literal, twenty-four-hour day. The problem is that God is not attempting to redefine our words in 2 Peter 3:8. Peter does not say that one day *is* a thousand years; he says that one day is *like* a thousand years. In other words, he is using figurative language to make his point. The point is *not* that we should interpret the word *day* as "a thousand years" everywhere we find it in Scripture; rather, the point is that the passing of time has no bearing on God's faithfulness to His promises.⁵²

9. Because it was not until Day 4 that the role of light source for the earth was transferred to the sun, some claim it is a mistake to think that the first three days of creation were the same length as the "solar days" from Day 4 onward. I disagree with that.

a. The problem with this contention is summarized well by Feinberg:

[E]ven if there is no sun, God still has the earth revolving on its axis, and he knows how long his activities took. Hence, even if sun, moon, and stars are not in place until day four, the events of the first three days still could have lasted 24-hours apiece. God would know how long (from our perspective) his actions took, so when Genesis 1 tells us that the first three days were equal to the next three, that is enough reason to think all six days equal in length. A miracle-working omniscient God who could create the whole universe surely knows how to calculate time in that universe at any stage of its existence.⁵³

b. John Whitcomb expresses it this way:

[W]e may assume that the first three days of creation were the same length as the last three days, in reference to which God set lights in the heavens "for seasons, and for days, and for years" (1:14), because exactly the same descriptive phrases are used of each group of three days. The fact that the sun was not created until

⁵¹ Todd S. Beall, "Days of Creation (24-hour Day View)" in Christopher L. Reese, et al., eds. *Dictionary of Christianity and Science* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2017), 159.

⁵² "[What does 2 Peter 3:8 mean when it says a thousand years are a day?](#)" Got Questions (accessed 1/11/26).

⁵³ Feinberg (2001), 601.

the fourth day does not make the first three days long periods of time, for on the first day God created a localized light source in the heaven in reference to which the rotating earth passed through the same night/day cycle. Surely Genesis 1:14 is intended to lock the days of creation into the well-known time units of astronomy, for if "days" in this verse are not literal days, then what are "years"?⁵⁴

10. It is unclear whether Moses intended the first day to begin with the "evening" (darkness) of v. 2 or the "morning" (light) of v. 3.

a. Wenham, Sailhamer, Steinmann, and others favor the former, but I am with those who think the creation days were reckoned from morning to morning, light to light. Gerhard von Rad, for example, says, "The day here appears to be reckoned from morning to morning, in strange contrast to its reckoning in the cultic law."⁵⁵ God creates the daylight, which turns into evening and nighttime, and the day is completed with the return of light in the morning. I think this better fits the refrain "there was evening and there was morning, the first day."⁵⁶

b. If that is correct, the question is how the *ex nihilo* creation of the material of v. 2 can be considered as having taken place on the first day, as required by the fact that everything ("the heavens and the earth") was made in six days (Gen. 1:31-2:1; Ex. 20:11, 31:17). Put pointedly, if the first day began with the creation of light and the material of v. 2 existed before that light, how was that material created on the first day? I think the question assumes a sharper and more technical understanding of when Day 1 began than Moses intended to convey. Just as God's creative utterance "Let there be light" that immediately *preceded* the appearance of light is understood to be part of his work on Day 1,⁵⁷ if his undescribed *ex nihilo* creation of the material of v. 2 was likewise immediately before the appearance of light, then it too may properly be considered part of his work on Day 1. If it all was instantaneous and virtually simultaneous, as could be the case given the power of God, then it all occurred essentially when light was created, which apparently is sufficient for inclusion in Day 1.

D. 1:6-8 – Separation of the waters and creation of the heavens, second day

⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ And God made the expanse and separated the

⁵⁴ John C. Whitcomb, Jr. "The Science of Historical Geology," *Westminster Theological Journal* 36 (Fall 1973), 67.

⁵⁵ Von Rad (1972), 53. Sarna (1989), 8, states, "As Rashbam noted, the day is here seen to begin with the dawn." Keil and Delitzsch (2006), 1:31, state, "[T]he days of creation are not reckoned from evening to evening, but from morning to morning." See also, Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part I: From Adam to Noah*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 28-30; Ronald Hendel, *Genesis 1-11*, AYB (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2024), 116.

⁵⁶ The Jews were not commanded to reckon their days as in Genesis 1. Perhaps they came to reckon days to begin at sundown from the requirement in Lev. 23:32 that the sabbath of the Day of Atonement be observed *from evening to evening*.

⁵⁷ This is apparent from the fact the divine word ("And God said . . .") is the creative act of the other days.

waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ And God called the expanse heavens. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

1. Some have argued that the word *rāqîa* ' (traditionally rendered "firmament") necessarily means something solid, but as Jack Collins notes, that "is not the best interpretation of the Hebrew."⁵⁸ The word is related to a verb meaning "to hammer out" or "stretch (a piece of metal) out," but "[i]t is the idea of spreading out that carries over to the noun, not the idea of a metallic substance."⁵⁹ Recognizing that the *rāqîa* ' depicts something spread out over the earth, Mathews writes, "There is no indication, however, that the author conceived of it as a solid mass, a 'firmament' (AV) that supported a body of water above it."⁶⁰ Gerhard Aalders likewise declares, "There is certainly no indication that the expanse must be considered as a firm substance itself."⁶¹ According to Sailhamer, "[I]t would be unlikely that the narrative would have in view here 'a solid partition or vault that separates the earth from the waters above' (Westermann, p. 116)."⁶² Thus, many modern translations opt for the term "expanse" (e.g., NASB, NASU, NIV, NET, HCSB, NJPS, ESV, CSB).

2. By calling the expanse (*rāqîa* ') he created "heavens" (*šāmāyim*) in v. 8 and specifying in vv. 14-17 that the heavenly bodies he created are *in* the heavens, God made clear that the expanse created on Day 2 was not merely the earth's atmosphere but included what we know as outer or interstellar space.⁶³ This is apparent in Ps. 19:1: "The heavens (*šāmāyim*) declare the glory of God, and the sky (*rāqîa* ') proclaims the work of His hands." Danny Faulkner comments:

Here the Hebrew word *rāqîa* ' is rendered "sky." This verse says the same thing two different ways. However, the parallelism works only if the two subjects, *šāmāyim* and *rāqîa* ', are equivalent on a conceptual level (i.e., they refer essentially to the same thing). These two entities are exactly equated in Genesis 1:8, so they are the same. Therefore, if the *rāqîa* ' made on Day Two is the earth's atmosphere, then the subject of Psalm 19:1 is the earth's atmosphere. No one believes this to be the case, for Psalm 19:1 is universally accepted as referring to the celestial heavens. . . . This is not the earth's atmosphere.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ C. John Collins, "Reading Genesis 1:1-2:3 as an Act of Communication: Discourse Analysis and Literal Interpretation," in Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall, eds., *Did God Create in Six Days?* (Taylors, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1999), 135 (fn. 8).

⁵⁹ Herman J. Austel, "שָׁמַיִם" in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:935. See also, J. Barton Payne, "רָקִיעַ" in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:862.

⁶⁰ Mathews (1996), 150.

⁶¹ Gerhard Charles Aalders in *Genesis*, The Student's Bible Commentary, trans. William Heynen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 1:59.

⁶² Sailhamer (1990), 29.

⁶³ See, Terry Mortenson, "[The Firmament: What Did God Create on Day 2?](#)" *Answers Research Journal* 13 (2020), 113-133.

⁶⁴ Danny R. Faulkner, *The Created Cosmos* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2016), 51.

3. The phrase "the expanse (*rāqîa* ') of the heavens" (vv. 14-17) does not mean that *rāqîa* ' is some specific part of heaven. That phrase simply is the full description of what *rāqîa* ' standing alone represents. *Rāqîa* ' is heaven described in terms of its breadth.

4. If the expanse that is the heavens does indeed include interstellar space, the celestial heavens, as seems to be the case, then the waters above the expanse cannot be the source of water that falls to the earth as rain or snow, as many people claim.

a. That fits with the fact that God does not name the waters above the expanse. As Paul Seely points out, "by not naming the waters above the firmament [expanse] as he named the waters below (Gen. 1:9–10) God signified that He had excluded them from the world made for man."⁶⁵ In other words, those waters were removed from the human experience. They are mentioned not because they are involved with mankind but because God's act of separating them from the waters below was an exercise of dominion, an act of imposing order upon them.⁶⁶ In keeping with their exclusion from mankind's world, the waters above are not mentioned again, except in Ps. 148:4, which v. 5 makes clear is a reference back to Gen. 1:7.

b. It is true that precipitation is said to come from the heavens,⁶⁷ but the source of that water is never said to be *above* the heavens. For example, Ps. 104:13 says that God waters the mountains from his lofty abode, but it does not say how he does that. This poetic text is compatible with God acting from his lofty abode to generate and direct rain within the earth's atmosphere. As E. J. Young stated, "I am unable to accept the opinion that the waters above the expanse refer to the clouds, for this position does not do justice to the language of the text which states that these waters are *above* the expanse."⁶⁸ The clouds are part of the divine recycling mechanism for distributing the waters on the earth to various parts of the earth.

c. The statement in Gen. 7:11 that at the start of Noah's flood the windows of heaven were opened does not mean that the waters above the expanse were poured onto the earth. God miraculously brought torrential rain for 40 days and nights as part of his judgment of flooding the earth, but nothing is said about the waters above the expanse. Indeed, the blessing promised in Mal. 3:10 to be poured out through "the windows of heaven" (same words) almost certainly is rain,⁶⁹ and no one thinks the source of that rain is the waters above the expanse. That is simply a way of referring to abundant rain sent by God.

⁶⁵ Paul H. Seely, "The Firmament and the Water Above Part II: The Meaning of 'The Water above the Firmament' in Gen. 1:6-8," *Westminster Theological Journal* 54 (Spring 1992), 34, citing O. H. Steck, *Der Schöpfungsbericht der Priesterschrift* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975) 72, 80 n. 304.

⁶⁶ Seely (1992), 34.

⁶⁷ Gen. 7:11-12; Deut. 11:11, 17, 28:12; 2 Sam. 21:10; 1 Ki. 8:35; 2 Chron. 6:26, 7:13; Job 38:37; Isa. 55:10; Jer. 10:13.

⁶⁸ E. J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1964), 90 (fn. 94).

⁶⁹ E.g., Douglas Stuart, "Malachi" in Thomas Edward McComiskey, ed., *The Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 3:1370-1371; David L. Peterson, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 217-218; Pieter A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 308.

E. 1:9-13 – Creation of dry land, seas, plants, and fruit trees, third day

⁹ And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

1. Dry land was made to appear by gathering the waters under the heavens, the water that was covering the entire earth, into a defined area, meaning the elevation levels on the surface of the earth were miraculously altered so that all the water could be contained in the newly created lower elevations. Though gathered to "one place," the waters presumably are called "seas," plural, because a huge body of water can be known by different names at different locations (e.g., the North Sea, the South Sea). The dry land is called earth.

2. However the separation of the land and seas was accomplished, the massive tectonic changes would, from a naturalistic perspective, render the land inhospitable to plant life for quite some time. But God, in his mighty power, dispelled the heat and did whatever else was necessary to make the land ready for vegetation that same day. As John MacArthur states, "If the laws of nature set limits on the creative power of God, we might as well rule out miracles altogether. But the laws of nature place no limit on what God can do (Genesis 18:14; Jeremiah 32:27)."⁷⁰

3. As most modern commentators recognize, vv. 11-12 refers to two distinct types of vegetation rather than three. Though *deše* ' usually just means grass, it is here a generic term ("vegetation") for the specified sub-categories of seed-bearing plants and fruit trees. Mathews's comment is representative: "The vegetation is of two kinds, expressed in general categories: (1) plants producing seed and (2) fruit trees whose fruit possesses seeds."⁷¹ Sailhamer adds, "The selectivity of the Creation account can be seen in the fact that it focuses only on the 'seed-bearing plants' and 'fruit trees.' Those are the plants that are for man's food [v.29]. No other forms of vegetation are mentioned."⁷² But we see in 1:30 that God had also created "green plants."

4. Rather than create the plants yielding seed and the fruit trees bearing fruit in a mature state instantly, God had those plants and trees sprout from the ground and grow with miraculous speed to maturity. That day they were yielding seed and bearing fruit. Faulkner

⁷⁰ John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2001), 93.

⁷¹ Mathews (1996), 152. See also, Cassuto (1961), 40; Wenham (1987), 20-21; Sarna (1989), 9; Hamilton (1990), 126 (more cautiously); Sailhamer (1990), 31-33; and Ross (1988), 110. This understanding is reflected in NASU, NIV, JB, REB, NRSV, HCSB, NIV, NET, and CSB.

⁷² Sailhamer (1990), 31.

remarks, "It is very easy to imagine this very rapid Day Three sprouting and growing to maturity of plants as resembling a timelapse movie of plant growth today."⁷³

5. Moses says that the earth brought forth this vegetation "each according to its kind."

a. The significance of "kinds" is expressed well by Mathews:

The vegetation, like the waters, is given prescribed boundaries: they reproduce "according to their various kinds." "Kind" (*min*) is used for broad categories of animals, birds, and fish (e.g., 1:21,24-25; 6:20; 7:14). Any attempt to correlate "kind" with a modern term, such as "species," is unwarranted, though the awareness of distinctive "kinds" is closer to a "scientific" description than is found in pagan cosmogonies. Just as "separations" are integral to creation, so are distinctions among living beings as indicated by their "kinds." Creation and procreation according to "kind" indicates that God has established parameters for creation. But the term is never used of humanity, showing that we are a unique order of creation. Furthermore, ethnic distinctions are incidental to the commonality of the human family.⁷⁴

b. So Scripture indicates that God cares about the distinctiveness and generational integrity of the various kinds of living things that he miraculously created in the beginning. But if, as the evolution story claims, all the different categories of life forms that have ever lived descended from a common ancestor by gradual variation over vast ages, then one kind of creature necessarily and regularly gave birth to another kind. That requires one to believe that God created in a way that was inconsistent with his interest in the distinctiveness and integrity of the kinds, a way that blurred the distinctiveness and violated the integrity. If God created the multitude of kinds by modified descent from a common ancestor, he would not portray that work in a way that so clearly indicates the contrary.

F. 1:14-19 – Creation of the heavenly bodies, fourth day

¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ And God made the two great lights-- the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night-- and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

⁷³ Danny R. Faulkner, "[A Proposal for a New Solution to the Light Travel Time Problem](#)," *Answers Research Journal* 6 (2013), 279-284.

⁷⁴ Mathews (1996), 152-153. See also, Wenham (1987), 21; Hamilton (1990), 126; Steinmann (2019), 54.

1. God creates the heavenly bodies – the sun, the moon, and the stars, which includes planets – to serve several purposes. They are to give light upon the earth, and by doing so, are to separate the day from the night, the light from the darkness. In other words, they are to serve as distinguishing celestial features of daytime and nighttime. The sun's visibility and light define and dominate or "rule" the day, whereas the sun's absence and the stars' visibility define the night, with the moon dominating or "ruling" the night when it is visible because of its greater brightness than stars. This means that from this point on the function that the miraculous localized light source had played regarding day and night is transferred to the sun. The heavenly bodies also serve as a celestial calendar, markers of seasons, days, and years as their positions vary on a schedule.

2. To fulfill God's intention that the heavenly bodies give light upon the earth and serve as distinguishing features of daytime and nighttime and as a celestial calendar, they would need to be visible on the earth, which means the light from those objects, nearly all of which are unimaginable distances from earth, would need to reach the earth that day. We are not told how God brought the light from such distant objects to earth in such a short time, but I suggest to you that he miraculously accelerated processes in deep space, in the cosmos beyond our solar system, so that deep space experienced billions of years of process, the equivalent of billions of years of time, in less than a day. Again, the image of time-lapse photography is helpful. Faulkner states:

As we have seen, the plants made on Day Three rapidly came to maturity. The reason for this was that the plants could not fulfill their purpose unless they rapidly matured. In a similar manner, the astronomical bodies could not fulfill their purposes unless they were readily visible. In this sense, the light had to be matured. No one suggests that the rapid development of dry land, plants, birds, land animals, and even man happened naturally. Rather, God rapidly and miraculously brought these things together to maturity. In a similar manner, why could not the light from distant astronomical bodies have undergone the same sort or process? Hence [my] solution to the light-travel-time problem proposes that God rapidly and miraculously brought the light of distant astronomical sources to the earth on Day Four.⁷⁵

3. The fact God created the heavenly bodies *after* he created the earth is contrary to the dominant creation story of western society, which insists that the universe erupted into existence from an imagined quantum field some 13.7 billion years ago and then, without any direction from a mind, naturally unfolded into the universe that we know, complete with the spontaneous origin of life on earth and its fantastic diversification through chance processes. Part of that story is that stars developed billions of years before the earth. So, the creation account of Day 4 is a real problem for those who want to force the Bible to fit that conventional narrative. They do so by denying that the text means the heavenly bodies were actually created on Day 4. They claim the text means only that the heavenly bodies became *visible* on earth at that time or were *appointed* to their purpose at that time, not that they actually were created at that time. That strikes me and many others as twisting the text rather than listening to it.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Faulkner (2016), 219.

⁷⁶ See, e.g., Camp (2015), 48-49.

G. 1:20-23 – Creation of sea creatures and flying creatures, fifth day

²⁰ And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." ²¹ So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

1. God creates all the kinds of sea creatures and birds, blesses them, and instructs them to multiply. As Keil and Delitzsch note, "it is not stated that only a single pair was created of each kind." On the contrary, the indication is that "the animals were created, not only in a rich variety of genera and species, but in large numbers of individuals."⁷⁷

2. The sea creatures are divided into two categories: "(1) extremely large and mostly-water related mammals or reptiles (crocodile, whale, large snakes; hence RSV 'the great sea monsters'); and (2) smaller fish and other more diminutive aquatic creatures, who either glide through the water or creep along its bed."⁷⁸ The word "birds" (*ʾôp*) can refer specifically to birds (e.g., Gen. 8:20; Lev. 1:14; Deut. 28:26; Ezek. 29:5), which is how most understand it here, but it literally means "flying creatures," so it can include additional creatures.

3. Of course, it is unclear precisely at what altitude "heaven" begins. There is some ill-defined zone "between heaven and earth" (2 Sam. 18:9; 1 Chron. 21:16; Ezek. 8:3; Zech. 5:9). Birds flying in that zone appear from earth to fly across the face of the expanse of heaven (Gen. 1:20).

4. It is common to note that v. 22 is the first occasion of a divine "blessing." Mathews comments:

This blessing indicates that the creatures are in a favored position before the Lord. . . . Here at creation, by this simple dictum, God provides these creatures with the security of a continued existence. The animal world is valued by God and is placed under the caretaking of humans (1:26-28). The startling reversal of God's attitude toward his world of creatures by the flood exhibits the enormity of the world's corruption (6:17; 7:22-23). Nevertheless, his renewed covenant with the world includes these creatures who will again "be fruitful and multiply in number" (8:17).⁷⁹

H. 1:24-31 – Creation of land animals and humans, sixth day

⁷⁷ Keil and Delitzsch (2006), 1:37-38. This is not to say that "kinds" equate to modern genera or species.

⁷⁸ Hamilton (1990), 129. These categories would include extinct groups, such as aquatic dinosaurs.

⁷⁹ Mathews (1996), 158-159.

²⁴ And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds - livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

1. God creates all the kinds of land creatures and makes mankind (male and female) in his image. He blesses the man and woman and commands them to multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it, and to rule over the other creatures. He gives mankind seed-bearing plants and fruit for food and gives the land creatures every green plant for food. God's statement to Noah in Gen. 9:3, "as I gave you the green plants," seems to refer generally to humanity's original non-carnivorous diet.

2. The land creatures are classified into three main groups commonly translated cattle (or livestock), creeping things, and wild animals (or beasts) of the earth.⁸⁰ As Aalders notes, "it is obvious that the intent is to include all the various kinds of land animals."⁸¹

3. *Remeś* ("creeping things") refers to a category of land animals that are distinguished by their mode of locomotion. It includes, by specific identification in the biblical text or clear inference from the text, spotted lizards, dabb lizards, chameleons, geckos, skinks, mice, rats, snakes, snails, slugs, centipedes, millipedes, scorpions, and spiders.⁸² Thus, Sarna states that "creeping things" is "[a] general term for creatures whose bodies appear to move close to the ground. Here it seems to encompass reptiles, creeping insects, and very small animals."⁸³ Wenham writes, "'creeping things' refers to mice, reptiles, insects, and any other little creatures that keep close to the ground."⁸⁴

4. The creation of the first humans, Adam and Eve, is here (1:26-27) stated in summary fashion. That event is elaborated upon in chapter 2. The plural forms ("us" and "our")

⁸⁰ E.g., RSV, NASB, REB (omits "of the earth"), NRSV, NASU, NKJV, NET (omits "of the earth"), and ESV.

⁸¹ Aalders (1981), 68.

⁸² See, Richard Whitekettle, "Rats are Like Snakes, and Hares are Like Goats: A Study in Israelite Land Animal Taxonomy," *Biblica* 82 (2001), 345-348. Following Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1991), 687, he takes *remeś* and *šereš* (in reference to land creatures) as synonyms.

⁸³ Sarna (1989), 10.

⁸⁴ Wenham (1987), 25.

have been much discussed. Many are convinced they refer to the heavenly court that surrounds God's throne, but the traditional interpretation that they allude to a plurality within God, even if the full Christian Trinity was not discernible, seems more likely to me. Mathews states:

Our passage describes the result of God's creative act by both plural and singular pronouns: the plural possessive "our image" in v. 26 and the singular pronoun "his image" in v. 27. Here the unity and plurality of God are in view. The plural indicates an intradivine conversation, a plurality in the Godhead, between God and his Spirit. By its reference to "the Spirit of God" preparing the "earth" for the creative word (1:2), the narrative permits a coparticipant with God in creation. Moreover, Prov 8:30 speaks of the personified "Wisdom" as God's coparticipant in creation. The later poets and prophets attribute the source of life to the "Spirit" (e.g., Job 33:4; Ps 104:30; Ezek 37).⁸⁵

5. Human beings are created in the "image and likeness of God" (Gen. 1:26-27, 5:1, 9:6), a description that is applied to no other creature.

a. Scripture does not elaborate on the meaning of the phrase, but it would convey to the original readers that humans were created with a resemblance to God. God, of course, is spirit (Jn. 4:24), and the Old Testament stresses his incorporeality and invisibility (see, Ex. 20:1-4; Deut. 4:15-16), so the resemblance no doubt relates to some nonphysical aspect(s) of humanity. Several elements of our nature seem to distinguish us from animals, but without scriptural guidance it is impossible to be certain which are intended. Perhaps the most fundamental difference is self-transcendence, the capacity to make oneself and the world the object of reflection. Other aspects of our uniqueness, some of which flow from self-transcendence, include moral and spiritual awareness, creativity, and abstract reasoning. We also have a unique capacity for worship, love, fellowship, and emotional experience.

b. Whatever the precise nature of our divine resemblance, it apparently makes us God's representative on earth, in the way ancient oriental kings were understood to represent God. Mankind was made God's vice-regent and was given the royal task of ruling creation (Gen. 1:26-28; Ps. 8:3-8). Wenham remarks, "Whereas Egyptian writers often spoke of kings as being in God's image, they never referred to other people in this way. It appears that the OT has democratized this old idea. It affirms that not just a king, but every man and woman, bears God's image and is his representative on earth."⁸⁶

c. Since the image of God is an inherent aspect of human nature, it was not lost through the introduction of sin into the human world. This is almost certainly the point of Gen. 5:1-3. The likeness of God that stamped Adam (and Eve) was perpetuated in his offspring, despite the corruption of sin. The continuing presence of the image of God is apparent from Gen. 9:6 where post-flood man is still referred to as bearing the image of God. In Jas. 3:9, James

⁸⁵ Mathews (1996), 163.

⁸⁶ Wenham (1987), 31.

condemns the use of the tongue to curse people on the basis that humans are made in the likeness of God.⁸⁷

6. It is worth noting that God did not create us to fill some need or lack on his part. Rather, creation is God's selfless and loving act of allowing others to share in the relational blessings of the Trinity. He created us that we might enter into the blessings of his existence, that we might enjoy the love, unity, communion, peace, harmony, and fellowship that he has had forever as an inherent part of his being.

a. Here is how John Mark Hicks puts it. It is a lengthy quote, but I think it is worth it.

Why did God create the cosmos, or more specifically, why did he create us? This question has often perplexed theologians as well as children who begin to wonder about it in their first Bible classes. It is tempting to answer that there was something lacking in God, that God had some need to fulfill or some inner desire to satisfy. But then God's act of creation would not be gracious, but self-interested. God created, according to this scenario, because God was selfish or ego-centered, or somehow was deficient in his own being. An inner necessity compelled God to supply something lacking in his own life. That would be tantamount to saying that God created us because he was incomplete. God, then, would have created out of necessity rather than grace. We would exist because God needs us. This puts God in our debt instead of we in his.

If we are to grasp why God created, we must understand what he created, and how this is reflected in God's other gracious acts in history (such as the creation of Israel and the church). . . . God has always intended a people for himself. Whether in the original act of creation or in the redemptive act of re-creation, God gathers a people for himself. God intends to share his love with a community. . . .

But why does God seek a communion of love with a people of his own creation? Is God a solitary figure whose loneliness drives him to create in order to have fellowship with others? Does God need company? . . .

The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that the divine reality is a community of loving fellowship between the Father, Son, and Spirit. It is a community of holy love which existed before the cosmos did. . . .

God did not create because he needed fellowship since he already enjoyed fellowship through the triune communion of the Father, Son, and Spirit. This fellowship was not created by an act of God as though at some point in time God became a fellowship. Rather, it is who God is. God is agape (1 John 4:8). Consequently, God did not need to turn to anything outside of himself in order to experience loving community. This was present through the mutual indwelling of

⁸⁷ For further discussion of "the image and likeness of God," see Wenham (1987), 29-32; Hamilton (1990), 134-138; Mathews (1996), 164-172.

God's triune fellowship.

I think the best analogy for understanding this divine act -- as limited as the analogy is -- is the decision of a couple to have children. Why do couples decide to have children? Certainly, in a fallen world, there are less than pure motives. But in the purest sense, couples decide to have children in order to share their love with another. The decision to have a child is, in the best of circumstances, a selfless decision. They share something that they could have kept to themselves. The love which exists between a husband and wife is a communion unsurpassed in human relations. When children are born into that loving communion, children share something they did not create. The parents give something they were not compelled to share. Children -- and we wish it were true in every instance -- are born out of the loving communion between parents. The couple shares their love with another.

Following this analogy, when the triune community decided to create, they decided to share with another something they already enjoyed. We humans did not create that fellowship, but it is offered to us in love. God did not create in order to receive (as if he needed anything outside of himself). He created to give of himself. Thus, the act of creation is an act of gracious, selfless love.⁸⁸

b. This is not to deny, of course, that God is glorified in and through creation, that he receives glory from it; it is to say that his glory in and through creation is magnified by the fact creation is an expression of his gracious and self-giving nature rather than the filling of something lacking in his being, the meeting of some need in his existence. In creation God decided to share with others his own loving fellowship in the Trinity.

7. Hamilton summarizes well the verses relating to God's provision of food:

What God creates he preserves. What he brings into being he provides for. Man is to have as his food the seed and fruit of plants. Animals and birds are to have the leaves. (The latter point accords with the description of the eschatological age when "the lion shall eat straw like the ox," Isa. 11:7; 65:25.) At no point is anything (human beings, animals, birds) allowed to take the life of another living being and consume it for food. The dominion assigned to the human couple over the animal world does not include the prerogative to butcher. Instead, humankind survives on a vegetarian diet. What is strange, and probably unexplainable (from a scientific position), is the fact that the animals too are not carnivorous but also vegetarians.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ John Mark Hicks, *Yet Will I Trust Him: Understanding God in a Suffering World* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1999), 53-58.

⁸⁹ Hamilton (1990), 140. Similarly, Keil and Delitzsch (2006), 1:40:

From [vv. 29-30] it follows, that, according to the creative will of God, men were not to slaughter animals for food, nor were animals to prey upon one another; consequently, that the fact which now prevails universally in nature and the order of the world, the violent and often painful destruction of life, is not a primary law of nature, nor a divine institution founded in the creation itself, but entered the world along with death at the fall of man, and became a necessity of nature through the curse of sin.

8. At the completion of his creation work, God pronounces that it was "very good." Those who insist that God created by the process of evolution face the difficult question of why a good and loving God would create the various living kinds through a process of predation, death, and suffering, when he could have avoided all of that by directly creating the kinds as indicated in Genesis 1, and then pronounce the result of that morbid process "very good."

9. The absence of a blessing on the land animals has generated much comment. Wenham writes:

Whereas birds and fish (v 22) and man (v 28) are blessed and told to be fruitful, no such command is given to the animals. Of the suggested explanations, two seem plausible: either the land animals are not told to multiply lest they compete with man and endanger his survival (cf. Exod 23:29; Lev 26:22; Jacob, 56) or more probably, because the blessing on man (v 28) covered all the works of the sixth day, including the land animals (so most recently Westermann, 1:141-42).⁹⁰

10. Some people argue that the days of creation cannot be regular days because too much activity occurred on Day 6 to fit within a regular day, but that assertion is unfounded. In response to the rhetorical question, "Who can imagine that much activity occurring?" James Jordan writes:

Well, anyone can imagine it:

6:00 A.M. – God makes the animals.

6:01 A.M. – God takes counsel with Himself to make man.

6:02 A.M. – God makes Adam. Forming him of dust takes one minute.

6:05 A.M. – After talking with Adam for a minute or so, God starts to plant the Garden.

6:10 A.M. – The Garden is completed.

6:11 A.M. – God puts Adam in the Garden.

6:12 A.M. – God warns Adam about the forbidden tree.

6:13 A.M. – Adam has breakfast.

6:30 A.M. – God reveals His decision to make Eve.

6:31 A.M. – God brings the animals to Adam to name. They are brought by "kinds," so not every specific species, let alone every individual, is brought. Let's say that it takes Adam eight hours to name them all, male and female, with a half-hour lunch break. (This is probably far too long at the time.) This brings us to:

3:00 P.M. – Adam takes a nap.

Mathews (1996), 175, comments, "God is depicted as the beneficent Provider, who insures food for both man and animal life without fear of competition or threat for survival." See also, Wenham (1987), 33-34, who notes that meat eating may be envisaged from the time of the Fall, in which case "9:3 is ratifying the post-fall practice of meat-eating rather than inaugurating it." According to von Rad (1972), 61, the universal vegetarianism indicated in these verses is "the only suggestion of the paradisiacal peace in the creation as it came God-willed from God's hand."

⁹⁰ Wenham (1987), 26.

3:28 P.M. – Adam wakes up and meets Eve.
3:29 P.M. – God speaks to Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:28-30).
3:30 P.M. – We still have two and a half hours to sunset.

Now, what's so hard about that?⁹¹

III. Chapter Two

A. 2:1-3 – Cessation from creating and blessing of the day, seventh day

¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

1. God "rested" on the seventh day from his work of creation in the sense he ceased his creation work not in the sense he rested from being tired. ⁹² Ross writes, "The word actually means 'cease,' more than 'rest' as understood today. It is not a word that refers to remedying exhaustion after a tiring week of work. Rather, it describes the enjoyment of accomplishment, the celebration of completion."⁹³

2. Genesis 2:2a does not mean the work of creation continued into the seventh day. Genesis 2:1 specifies that the work was finished on the sixth day, so 2:2a is better translated "by the seventh day God finished (or had finished) the work he had been doing" (e.g., NASB, NJB, NASU, HCSB, NIV, NET).

a. The fact God ceased, rested from, this particular creative work means that all things that came into existence after that time came into existence in a different way; they were derived from or descended from what was created miraculously in the beginning. So all

⁹¹ James B. Jordan, *Creation in Six Days* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1999), 47. See also, Russell Grigg, "[Naming the Animals: All in a day's work for Adam](#)," *Creation Ex Nihilo* 18 (September-November 1996), 46-49.

⁹² Mathews (1996), 178; Wenham (1987), 35.

⁹³ Ross (1988), 113-114. See also, Derek Kidner, *Genesis, TOTC* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 53. This "rest" is described in Ex. 20:11 by the verb נָחַ, which includes the meaning "to cease activity." John N. Oswalt "נָחַ" in Willem A. VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 3:58. To say that God's statement in Ex. 31:17 that he was "refreshed" (*naṗāš*) is anthropomorphic still leaves the question of what he meant. In what way was he refreshed that is analogous to human refreshment? MacArthur (2001), 184, comments, "To say that God was 'refreshed' does not imply that He was rejuvenated by regaining lost energy. Rather, the sense of it is that He paused to delight in His works. He was 'refreshed' by delight and satisfaction in what He had done." See also, Keil and Delitzsch (2006), 1:42; Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., "From Chaos to Cosmos: A Critique of the Non-Literal Interpretations of Genesis 1:1-2:3," in Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall, eds., *Did God Create in Six Days?* (Taylors, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1999), 171; Kelly (1997), 238. In that sense, it accords with Ross's remark about *šābat* in Gen. 2:2-3.

plants, animals, and people that came into existence after the six days were created by God but they were not created the same way as the first members of their kind. Scripture tells us that God ceased from that specific creative work.

b. That is just one of the reasons I reject the claim of some theistic evolutionists that the six-day creation of Genesis 1 is a symbolic reference to God creating by the process of evolution. Even if I were willing to grant that six days somehow can be turned into billions of years, which I am not, evolution is allegedly still ongoing, still "creating," so it cannot be how God created in the beginning. He rested from that work.

c. Moreover, the revealed order in which God created living things is completely at odds which the alleged evolutionary order of their appearance. For example:

According to Genesis

Land plants before sea creatures
Trees before land animals
Birds before land reptiles
Bats before land mammals
Sea mammals before land mammals
Flying insects before land insects
Flowering plants before insects
Mankind before thorns and thistles

According to Evolution

Sea creatures before land plants
Land animals before trees
Land reptiles before birds
Land mammals before bats
Land mammals before sea mammals
Land insects before flying insects
Insects before flowering plants
Thorns and thistles before mankind⁹⁴

3. God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, but no mention is made in Genesis of a Sabbath (a rest) for man.

a. The seventh-day rest of Genesis focuses exclusively on God. There is no command for man to observe anything regarding the seventh day. In fact, the word Sabbath, which is the name given to the commanded observance of the seventh day by Israelites, is never used in Genesis. As Sarna observes: "The human institution of the Sabbath does not appear in the narrative. . . . [A]s we read in Exodus 31:13, 16, and 17, the Sabbath is a distinctively Israelite ordinance, a token of the eternal covenant between God and Israel. Its enactment would be out of place before the arrival of Israel on the scene of history."⁹⁵

b. Sabbath observance is first mentioned in Ex. 16:21-30, where it seems the Israelites were not familiar with it. This is consistent with the fact there is no mention of anyone observing the Sabbath prior to that time. In Ex. 20:8-11 Israel is commanded to remember the Sabbath day, in imitation of God's conduct in creation, by keeping it as a special day separate from every other day and dedicated to God. Exodus 20:11 explains that God *at that time* (not at creation) blessed and sanctified the Sabbath day (the name of the seventh day as a day of rest for man) because it was analogous to the day of divine rest that he previously had

⁹⁴ "[Which Came First?](#)" *Answers Magazine* (October 1, 2023).

⁹⁵ Sarna (1989), 14.

blessed and sanctified at creation.⁹⁶ This understanding of Ex. 20:11 is supported by two considerations.

(1) First, Deut. 5:15 says the Sabbath commandment is based on a prior historical event: because God rescued the Israelites from Egypt, he therefore commanded them at Sinai to keep the Sabbath. Reading Ex. 20:11 in a parallel manner yields: because God rested at creation, he therefore blessed the Sabbath at Sinai.

(2) Second, the Hebrew particle used in Ex. 20:11 and Deut. 5:15 and translated "therefore" is normally used "in the Pentateuch to connect causally an event in the past with a situation some time later (cf. Gen. 2:24; 25:20; 42:21; 47:22; Exod. 13:15; Num. 21:27; Deut. 24:18); hence, it is better translated 'consequently now' (in the sense of post hoc ['after this'] and propter hoc ['on account of this'])."⁹⁷

Excursus on Dating the Creation Week

Discerning what Scripture teaches about the age of creation begins, of course, with the revelation in Genesis 1:1-2:3, which we have just studied, that God created everything during the six days of the creation week. Mankind, Adam and Eve, were created on Day 6, so if we can determine how long ago Adam was created, we can determine the age of all creation; neither the earth nor any created thing is more than six days older than Adam.

Scripture constrains the date on which Adam was created to only thousands of years before the present and therefore likewise constrains the date of all creation. The biblical keys to dating the age of mankind are the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11. Some claim it is an abuse of the genealogies in Genesis to conclude from them that mankind has not existed for the hundreds of thousands of years claimed by the scientific establishment. As they see it, the genealogies provide no constraints on the age of mankind but serve only to establish lines of descent and to emphasize the fact death was a consequence of the sin of Adam and Eve. They are mistaken in that regard.

The genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 are unique. Only they are in the following formula:

When A had lived X years, he fathered B. A lived Y years after he fathered B and had other sons and daughters.

When B had lived X years, he fathered C. B lived Y years after he fathered C and had other sons and daughters.

When C had lived X years, he fathered D. C lived Y years after he fathered D and had other sons and daughters.

⁹⁶ So as Sarna (1989), 14, remarks, "there cannot be any doubt that [Gen. 2:1-3] provides the unspoken foundation for the future institution of the Sabbath."

⁹⁷ Harold H. P. Dressler, "The Sabbath in the Old Testament," in D. A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 38 (n. 43).

(The genealogy in Genesis 5 adds after each entry, "Thus all the days of A/B/C were Z [= X + Y] years, and he died.")

The claim of those who deny that the genealogies constrain the age of mankind is that one cannot determine from this formula the span of time between the ancestors and descendants because "A fathered B" or "B fathered C" or "C fathered D" etc. could mean that "A fathered an unidentified ancestor of B" or "B fathered an unidentified ancestor of C" or "C fathered an unidentified ancestor of D," respectively. In that case, one could not construct a reliable chronology because there are unknown gaps of time between the unidentified ancestor and the actual descendant identified. In other words, if the statement "A fathered B" means "A fathered an ancestor of B" one would have no idea as to the identity of this ancestor and thus no idea how many generations he lived prior the birth of "B."

Though old-earthers often assure their audience that the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 contain this ambiguity, the genealogies they cite as containing such gaps are not in the form of the Genesis genealogies, which are known as *chronogenealogies*. Specifically, the genealogies they cite do not mention the age of the father at the birth of the next name in the line. Chronogenealogies, on the other hand, are like the brief passages in 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles where a king is said to have reigned a certain number of years before being succeeded by another. Those passages are regularly put together to form generational chronologies that are used to establish dates. Travis R. (Rick) Freeman concludes:

[G]ap proponents can give absolutely no evidence, ancient or modern, biblical or extra-biblical, in which a "father's" age at the birth of a certain son was clearly not meant to convey chronological information. Thus no precedent exists for understanding the procreation ages in a nonchronological way. . . . No precedent exists for interpreting the formula "X lives Y years and fathered Z" to mean that "X lived Y years and fathered the line of Z." Such a meaning would in fact contradict many centuries of interpretive history.⁹⁸

Notice that in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 it is said that the progenitor "had *other* sons and daughters." This makes it very unlikely that the specified son refers to someone other than an actual son of the progenitor. This is corroborated in the cases of Adam and Seth, Lamech and Noah, Shem and Arphaxad, and Terah and Abraham and is not demonstrably incorrect in any of the other cases. Hebrew grammar also supports the idea that the offspring referred to in the Genesis genealogies are direct physical descendants.⁹⁹

So it is not surprising that no one for millennia read the Genesis genealogies as old-earthers propose. Let that sink in. They were always understood, by Jews and Christians, to be

⁹⁸ Travis R. (Rick) Freeman, "[A New Look at the Genesis 5 and 11 Fluidity Problem](#)," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 42 (Autumn 2004): 284, 286. See also, J. Paul Tanner, "[The Genealogies of Genesis 5 & 11: Reasons for Understanding These as Gapless Chronologies](#)," Evangelical Theological Society Conference San Antonio (November 17, 2016).

⁹⁹ See, e.g., Gerhard Hasel, "[The Meaning of the Chronogenealogies of Genesis 5 and 11](#)," *Origins* 7 (No. 2, 1980), 66.

sources of genuine chronological information. Benjamin Shaw concluded in his 2004 doctoral dissertation titled *The Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 and Their Significance for Chronology*: "The modern view of the Genesis genealogies, developed since the mid-nineteenth century, is that there is some purpose behind the genealogies apart from chronology, and that chronology is not part of their purpose. However, such a view is a radical shift from the constant view throughout the history of interpretation up to the mid-nineteenth century."¹⁰⁰ Later he wrote, "All chronologists prior to the mid-nineteenth century took the Genesis genealogies as complete and hence adequate for constructing a chronology back to the creation of man."¹⁰¹ Jordan says of the claim of the genealogies cannot be used to construct a chronology because they may be full of missing generations: "Such a totally preposterous misreading of the text never occurred to anyone in the entire history of the Church before the late nineteenth century."¹⁰² Indeed, why would God express himself in a way that, according to old-earthers, he knew would be uniformly misunderstood for millennia?

Using the Masoretic text (the standard Hebrew text that is translated in our English Bibles), the Genesis genealogies reveal that just under 2000 years elapsed from Adam to Abraham, meaning that just under 2000 years (1,946) elapsed from the creation week to Abraham. Abraham's birth can be securely dated to about 2166 B.C., so the creation week was roughly 4100 B.C.¹⁰³ There is a textual issue regarding some of the ages in the Genesis genealogies, which could possibly expand the time between Adam and Abraham another 1400 years or so.¹⁰⁴ That would still leave the age of creation well under 10,000 years.

Even granting the possibility of gaps in these genealogies, the extent to which they could further expand the time is quite limited. It seems clear from Genesis 4–11 that a gap is impossible between Adam and Seth, Lamech and Noah, Shem and Arphaxad, and Terah and Abraham. Jude declares (v. 14) that Enoch was the seventh from Adam, which indicates there also are no gaps between Seth and Enosh, Enosh and Kenan, Mahalalel and Jared, and Jared and Enoch. When one considers that the genealogies include men (e.g., Kenan, Mahalalel, Serug) about whom no other information is given in Scripture, it is groundless to assert that vast numbers of generations were omitted for lack of significance. Moreover, the genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1:1–4, 24–27 and Luke 3:34–38 follow those of Genesis precisely, casting further doubt on the notion they are extremely fragmentary.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Benjamin Shaw, *The Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 and Their Significance for Chronology* (2004), 103.

¹⁰¹ Shaw (2004), 208-209.

¹⁰² Jordan (1999), 99.

¹⁰³ For how we can know that Abraham was born around 2166 B.C., see Ashby L. Camp, "[Archaeology and the Bible](#)," 4-5.

¹⁰⁴ See, e.g., Hasel (1980), 53-58; J. A. Young, "[Septuagintal Versus Masoretic Chronology in Genesis 5 and 11](#)," in Robert L. Ivey, Jr., ed., *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Creationism* (Pittsburgh, PA: Creation Science Fellowship, 2003), 417-430; Henry B. Smith Jr., "[The Case for the Septuagint's Chronology in Genesis 5 and 11](#)," in John H. Whitmore, ed., *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Creationism* (Pittsburgh, PA: Creation Science Fellowship, 2018), 117-132; Christopher Eames, "[The Chronological Debate From Adam to Abraham: In Defense of the Masoretic Text](#)" (June 27, 2023).

¹⁰⁵ Some manuscripts of Luke 3:36 include an extra generation ("Cainan") between Arphaxad and Shelah. It seems likely, however, that "Cainan" was not in the original of Luke 3:36. It is omitted in P⁷⁵, a papyrus manuscript from the third century (one of the oldest copies of this text), and in D, a fifth century uncial. Given the presence of "Cainan" (Greek for Kenan) in Luke 3:37, it is understandable how a scribe could have repeated it accidentally in Luke 3:36. See, Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 358–359.

Perhaps it will be useful for me to lay out my basic approach to this subject. Consider these propositions:

1. Scripture affirms nothing contrary to fact.
2. Scripture affirms that the cosmos and the basic kinds of all living things came into being over six actual days less than 10,000 years ago.
3. The cosmos and the basic kinds of all living things did not come into being over six actual days less than 10,000 years ago.

All three propositions cannot be true (in the same sense at the same time). One must reject at least one of them to be logically coherent. I accept propositions 1 and 2 (and thus reject proposition 3). That means that I am not examining nature trying to find out *whether* the cosmos and the basic kinds of all living things came into being over six actual days less than 10,000 years ago. I know they did because God has told me so in his word, and I trust what he has told me. Rather, I am examining nature trying to understand how, given the fact it is less than 10,000 years old, it came to have its present qualities and features. Even when I do not know how a certain quality or feature can be explained in terms of a creation that is less than 10,000 years old, I trust that it can be and that someday I will understand it, even if not in this life.

To illustrate the concept, imagine you walk into a friend's house and see water dripping from the ceiling. Under the drip spot is a fish tank filled with 10 gallons of water. You time the leak and see that it's dripping at the rate of 1 gallon per hour. So you conclude that the leak has been dripping into the tank for 10 hours – it drips at 1 gallon per hour and you have 10 gallons. When you think about it more, however, you realize that the correctness of your conclusion depends on certain *unproven assumptions*. You assumed that there was no water in the tank when it was placed under the leak, you assumed that no water entered the tank from another source or exited the tank after it was placed under the leak, and you assumed that the leak always was dripping at the rate of 1 gallon per hour. If your friend left a note saying, "I put the tank under the leak at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday" and you arrived at 2:00 p.m., you could either believe your friend, which would mean rejecting one or more of those assumptions, or continue to accept the assumptions, which would mean disbelieving your friend. This is the like the situation we face with the Bible and various dating methods like radiometric dating. We can believe the Bible and reject certain assumptions on which the conclusion of vast age is based or continue to accept those assumptions and disbelieve the Bible.

Now, those who reject proposition 1 and/or 2 think I am forcing the data of nature to fit a false conclusion. Whether I am right or they are right depends on whether propositions 1 and 2 are true. The issue for Christians, Bible believers, is whether proposition 2 is true. I have explained why I am convinced that it is. If the Bible is true, and if it reveals that creation is less than 10,000 years old, then all contrary interpretations of nature necessarily are false.

To use another illustration, imagine you happen to be visiting a morgue when a "John Doe corpse" is brought in. An angel of the Lord appears to you and says, "this John Doe was

born in 2014." He then vanishes. You hear the medical examiner dictating into his recorder, "The John Doe just brought in is approximately 80 years old." You tell him, "You are mistaken about the age. An angel told me this fellow is only 12 years old." He laughs and says, "I base my conclusions on science, not on superstition. As you can see, this person is almost entirely bald, with some grey hair on the sides, and has wrinkled, baggy, and spotted skin. In addition, I've determined that he has advanced hardening of the arteries!"

Now, in the face of that evidence, you can conclude that the angel was wrong, you can claim that the angel did not really mean that this person was born in 2014 ("born" really means "turned 68"), or you can continue trusting what the angel told you and seek to understand how someone 12 years old could be in that condition. As you investigate, you find anomalies, things that do not fit with the conclusion of his advanced age. Maybe his eyes are too clear for an elderly person or his joints or teeth aren't worn enough. These things reinforce your conviction, based on your trust in the angel's word, that the medical examiner is mistaken. The medical examiner, however, gives no weight to the angel's testimony. The only evidence in his scales is the physical evidence. And the anomalies you cite are (so far) insufficient to outweigh what he interprets as strong or heavy evidence of aging.

You hope that, as you continue working from your conviction that the person is in fact 12 years old, you will discover how to make sense of the seemingly disparate data. In other words, you hope you will come to understand by reason what you know by faith to be true, to understand how a 12-year-old boy can be bald, have wrinkled and spotted skin, and have advanced arteriosclerosis. Because you are asking questions others are not asking, perhaps you will discover a medical disorder, like Progeria, that produces these symptoms in children. But even if you do not, you trust that such an answer exists and that one day, in this life or the next, it will be made known.

Though only a small minority, there are many scientists with Ph.D.'s from respected (even elite) universities in physics, nuclear physics, astronomy, astrophysics, geology, geophysics, paleontology, genetics, and all fields of biology who are convinced that creation is less than 10,000 years old. The data of nature can be interpreted consistently with that conclusion. Indeed, much scientific data is inconsistent with the vast age of the earth and cosmos proposed by the scientific establishment.¹⁰⁶ Just as in those cases, the scientific establishment interprets the seemingly disparate data in a way that conforms to their prior conclusion about age, so young-agers interpret seemingly disparate data in a way consistent with their conclusion about age drawn from Scripture.

B. 2:4-7 – Earth's pre-sin state and creation of Adam

⁴ These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. ⁵ When no shrub of the field was yet in the land and no plant of the field had yet sprung up-- for the LORD God had not

¹⁰⁶ See, e.g., Andrew A. Snelling, et al., "[Evidence for a Young Earth and Creation](#)" (November 29, 2019).

caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,⁶ and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground--⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

1. The structure of Genesis is marked by the initial section on creation (1:1-2:3) followed by ten *tôlēdôt* sections: of the heavens and the earth (2:4 - 4:26); of Adam (5:1 - 6:8); of Noah (6:9-9:29); of Shem, Ham, and Japheth (10:1-11:9); of Shem (11:10-26); of Terah (11:27-25:11); of Ishmael (25:12-18); of Isaac (25:19-35:29); of Esau, the father of Edom (twice) (36:1-8; 36:9-37:1); of Jacob (37:2-50:26).

a. The word *tôlēdôt* often is translated as "generations," "histories," or simply "descendants." As a heading for the various sections of Genesis, it announces the historical development from the ancestor and means "this is what became of . . ." ¹⁰⁷

b. So in 1:1-2:3 the creation is brought into existence, then in 2:4-4:26 we are told what became of that creation. Day 6 of the creation week is highlighted with additional details because Adam and Eve, their placement in the Garden, and God's command governing their lives in the Garden are central to what became of the very good creation (1:31). In this section (2:4-4:26), we see that sin entered the world through mankind, the ground was cursed (Gen. 3:17), which included the subjection of all subhuman creation to futility and the bondage of corruption (Gen. 3:17; Rom. 8:18-22), and sin spread and worsened.

2. Genesis 2:5 says that two specific types of vegetation had not *yet* sprung up: "shrub (*śîah*) of the field" and "plant (*'ēsebh*) of the field." These are different from the seed-bearing plants and fruit trees mentioned in Gen. 1:11-12; they are post-Fall forms of vegetation. The mention of their "yet" having sprung up contrasts the pre-Fall and post-Fall worlds and points to the impending lapse of mankind and judgment of God. As Cassuto, a renowned Jewish scholar, explains:

What is meant by the term *śîah* of the field and the *'ēsebh* of the field mentioned here? Modern commentators usually consider the terms to connote the vegetable kingdom as a whole; thence it follows that our section contradicts the preceding chapter, according to which vegetation came into being on the third day All interpretations of this kind introduce into the text something that is not there, in order to create the inconsistency. When the verse declares that these species were missing, the meaning is simply that these kinds were wanting, but no others. If we wish to understand the significance of the *śîah* of the field and the *'ēsebh* of the field in the context of our narrative, we must take a glance at the end of the story. It is stated there, in the words addressed by the Lord God to Adam after he had sinned: THORNS AND THISTLES it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the *'ēsebh* of the field (iii 18). The words *'ēsebh* of the field are identical with the expression in our verse; whilst thorns and thistles, which are synonymous with the *śîah* of the field, are a particularization of the general concept conveyed by the latter (cf. one of the *śîhîm* in Gen xxi 15).

¹⁰⁷ Ross (1988), 69-72.

These species did not exist, or were not found in the form known to us, until after Adam's transgression, and it was in consequence of the fall that they came into the world or received their present form.¹⁰⁸

3. Genesis 2:5-6 means that before creation was cursed as a result of mankind's sin, there were no "desert shrubs" or "cultivated grains."¹⁰⁹ There were no desert shrubs because prior to the curse there were no deserts. The earth was a lush paradise that was watered thoroughly by streams or springs that flowed up from the ground.¹¹⁰ It was only after God substituted rainfall, which is sporadic and uneven, for the original paradisiacal watering mechanism that deserts arose. There were no cultivated grains because prior to the Fall man had not been sentenced to backbreaking farming; prior to the Fall, man worked the Garden not the ground.

4. In saying that these plant forms had "not yet" arisen, the question is raised in the reader's mind, "Well what happened that they arose thereafter?" As the story unfolds, we learn of mankind's sin and God's sentence. In Gen. 3:17-18 we are told that the earth shall be such that it will bring forth "thorns and thistles," which are an example of desert shrubs, and that

¹⁰⁸ Cassuto (1988), 101-102. See also, Michael R. Butler, "Additional Comments on the Genesis 2:5 Argument" in *The Report of the Minority of the Committee to Study the Framework Hypothesis*, presented to the Presbytery of Southern California of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (October 15-16, 1999), 152-155 and Sailhamer (1990), 40. Some who agree the plants of Genesis 2:5 are distinct from those of Genesis 1:11-12 disagree in other particulars (e.g., Michael J. Kruger, "[An understanding of Genesis 2:5](#)," *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 11 [1997], 106-110).

¹⁰⁹ Hamilton (1990), 154, says, "the reference is to some kind of desert shrub or bush." Koehler and Baumgartner (2001), 2:1321, includes: "for this see also R. Albertz *Weltschöpfung und Menschenschöpfung* p. 222⁷⁴: a wild plant growing in the desert or steppe." Mark D. Futato states in "Because It Had Rained: A Study Of Gen 2:5-7 With Implications For Gen 2:4-25 And Gen 1:1-2:3," *Westminster Theological Journal* 60:1 (Spring 1998), 3, "The phrase, *śāḥ-haśśādeh*, refers to the wild vegetation that grows spontaneously after the onset of the rainy season, and *'ēseb-haśśādeh* refers to cultivated grains." Bruce K. Waltke states in *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 253, " *'ēseb haśśādeh*, 'plant of the field,' refers to cultivated grains."

¹¹⁰ NET note states, "The Hebrew word טֶהֱ (*'ed*) was traditionally translated 'mist' because of its use in Job 36:27. However, an Akkadian cognate *edu* in Babylonian texts refers to subterranean springs or waterways. Such a spring would fit the description in this context, since this water 'goes up' and waters the ground." In specific reference to Genesis 2:6, Koehler and Baumgartner (2001), 1:11, state, "the subterranean stream of fresh water, groundwater." The two most thorough studies of the meaning of *'ed* are Tsumura (1989), 94-116 and Gerhard F. Hasel and Michael G. Hasel, "The Hebrew Term *'ed* in Gen 2,6 and Its Connection in Ancient Near Eastern Literature," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 112 (2000), 321-340. Tsumura concludes that the word probably refers to subterranean water that comes up to the surface of the earth. Hasel and Hasel agree (p. 324) "Tsumura is correct in deriving the *'ed*-moisture from a source other than the sky and its clouds from which rain falls," but for philological and conceptual reasons, they reject his hypothesis that the ground was watered from a subterranean ocean. They also show that Dahood's interpretation "rain cloud" lacks philological, syntactical, and conceptual credibility. They conclude that *'ed* in Genesis 2:6 is best understood as a mist/dew, which, in distinction to watering from above by rain, watered the ground through a continual rising from below, from the earth. "It seems certain that the watering of the arable land, the >>ground,<< by means of >>mist/dew<< (*'ed*) is radically different from the post-flood watering of the earth by rain (Gen 7,12; 8,2)" (Hasel and Hasel [2000], 339). Contrary to the suggestion of some, Job 36:27 is not helpful in clarifying the meaning of *'ed* in Genesis 2:6. Since the term in Job 36:27 "appears in relationship to heaven and not to the earth . . . it does not seem to provide a contextual parallel except in contrast" (Hasel and Hasel [2000], 323). In addition, the Job passage has its own uncertainties. See, Tsumura (1989), 115-116; Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 273; Robert L. Alden, "אֵד" in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:17; Jordan (1999), 237-238.

man will through toilsome labor eat cultivated grains (wheat, barley, etc.), which is the exact phrase used in 2:5 (כֹּשֶׁבַע הַשָּׂדֶה). Mathews states:

The purpose of this *tôlédôt* section is its depiction of human life before and after the garden sin; the condition of the "land" after Adam's sin is contrasted with its state before the creation of man. Genesis 2:5–7 is best understood in light of 3:8–24, which describes the consequences of sin. This is shown by the language of 2:5–6, which anticipates what happens to the land because of Adam's sin (3:18, 23). When viewed this way, we find that the "shrub" and "plant" of 2:5 are not the same as the vegetation of 1:11–12.¹¹¹

Butler is worth quoting at length:

The author is not saying there is no vegetation at this time, but that there [was] an absence of specific kinds of vegetation. The author previously told us that God created seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the 4th [sic] day. Here he tells us that there were no wild desert shrubs and cultivated grains. Clearly there is no conflict [with chapter 1]. There were certain types of vegetation present but not others.

Three questions spring immediately to mind though. First, if there was no rain, how could there be any vegetation? The author provides the answer in v. 6. At that time there was a spring that came out of the ground that watered the surface of the earth. So while there was no rain, there was an abundant supply of water. The second and third questions are: Why were there no wild shrubs of the field if there was a plenteous supply of water? And why was there no cultivated grain? The answer to the former is obvious. The appearance of wild desert shrubs would be out of place in a land that drank deeply from plenteous water. Moreover, desert shrubs are not what is expected in a lavish environment of lush vegetation that is described in Genesis 1:11-12. The answer to the latter comes in v. 7. There the author tells us that man was created from the dust of the ground. Thus it appears that the reason for the lack of cultivated grain was that man was not yet present to cultivate the land.

So far, then, the author tells us of a completed creation. There is a spring coming out of the ground that waters the seed-bearing plants and fruit-bearing trees and a complete absence of desert-type vegetation. This is a lush environment not a desert environment. Since everything is in place God now creates man, his image-bearer, and places him in this glorious creation that he is to have dominion over. Everything is good. But why does our author bother to mention the fact there was no shrubs and that there was no cultivated grains? The remarks that there were no wild shrubs seems to be merely a piece of trivia while the assertion that there was no cultivated grains seems to be completely superfluous – if there was no man, obviously there was no cultivated plants. That no answer is immediately forthcoming causes the reader to anticipate some sort of explanation. As he reads

¹¹¹ Mathews (1996), 194. See also, Kelly (1997), 124-126.

on he finds the author describing the man being placed in a garden filled with beautiful trees overloaded with delicious fruit. Man is given the task of taking care of the garden and is told by Jehovah God that the fruit is for his nourishment and enjoyment, even the fruit of the tree of life. He is forbidden, however, to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and if he does eat of it he will die.

Dramatic tension is thus introduced into the story. Everything is good, but there is also a potential for disaster. Paradise may be lost. Light is now shed on the previous statement about the absence of cultivated grains. Man is given the task of tending to the mature garden full of fruit trees. And since he has an abundant supply of food there is no need to cultivate grain crops. But what if man ate the forbidden fruit? Would he still enjoy the lush surroundings of Eden and partake of its choice fruit?

The rest of the story is well known. . . . No longer will man enjoy the fruit of the edenic trees. Now he must toil over recalcitrant soil in order to grow grains that he will make into bread. What was thus anticipated in 2:5-6, and portended in 2:17 has now come to pass. Whereas in the beginning there was no desert shrubs (thorns and thistles), there now will be. Whereas there was no cultivated grains, man will now have to engage in the backbreaking labor of plowing, sowing, irrigating and harvesting them for sustenance.

But what happened to the spring? The answer is implied by the cursing of the ground. Many commentators suggest that man will now have to contend with the thorns and thistles as though they were weeds choking out his crops. But this is not quite the point (the text certainly does not say this). Rather the land will not be watered as it was before and will thus become arid. From this time forward, the sporadic rain will be its only source of water. Only desert shrubs are fit to grow in such an environment. Thus we can infer that Jehovah God has dried up the spring.¹¹²

5. In Gen. 2:7-9 and 15-25, the story of Adam and Eve's creation, which was noted summarily in 1:26-27, is reported in greater detail. According to 2:7, Adam was formed before he became a living being. The body was first formed, which is confirmed by the reference to nostrils, and then the breath of life was breathed into it. Only then did the lifeless or inanimate body become a living being through this unique interaction, which speaks of a distinctive relationship with God.

a. Thus, Wenham writes, "By blowing on an inanimate body made from the earth, God made man come alive."¹¹³ Von Rad says, "God 'forms' him from the ground; . . . This man, however, formed from the earth, becomes a living creature only when inspired with the divine breath of life."¹¹⁴ Hamilton says the creation of man is "a work that includes both formation and animation" and says "dust was the raw material out of which man was created, as

¹¹² Butler (1999), 152-155.

¹¹³ Wenham (1987), 60-61.

¹¹⁴ Von Rad (1972), 77.

'rib' was the corresponding raw material for the woman."¹¹⁵ Paul refers to this event in 1 Cor. 15:47, "The first man was of the dust of the earth." If Adam was born to animal parents, as evolutionist's claim, he would have been formed *as* a living being. It would not be accurate to say, at the text does, that he was formed *before* he became a living being.

b. In a similar vein, Eve's creation from Adam's body that is reported in subsequent verses is not described as her being formed or taken from the ground. Rather, she is said to have been made from Adam (Gen. 2:22-23). So if Adam was made from the body of an animal, as would be the case if he descended from an animal, a reader certainly would not expect his creation to be described as his having been formed and taken from the ground. He would expect the description to parallel that of Eve's creation, to say that he was made from the animal. In saying he was made from the ground, Moses thus reveals that Adam was *not* made from an animal.

C. 2:8-14 – The garden in Eden and two special trees

⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰ A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria [Asshur]. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

1. The NET bucks a long tradition and says that the LORD God planted an "orchard" in the east, in Eden. The accompanying note states, "Traditionally 'garden,' but the subsequent description of this 'garden' makes it clear that it is an orchard of fruit trees." Genesis 2:8 says God planted a garden, and 2:9 identifies what he made spring up from that planting as "every *tree* that is pleasant for sight and good for food."

2. It is not clear whether God had planted the garden or orchard in Eden before he made Adam or did so at the time he made him (the verb can be rendered "had planted," as in the NIV). But whenever it was done, it seems that God "planted" the trees in the garden, perhaps using seeds or cuttings from trees he created elsewhere, and then had them miraculously spring up and mature to be sources of food on or by Day 6 when he created Adam and Eve. The garden in Eden is where God brought together in one spot the full assortment of food sources.

3. In reporting the location of Eden, it seems that Moses, by the Spirit, is presenting material from a pre-flood source, whether written or oral, and passing it on without change, even though the geographical bearings given in that source no longer existed in the

¹¹⁵ Hamilton (1990), 156, 158.

world of his day, a world that had been completely resurfaced by the flood. This catastrophe was known by his audience and is reported by Moses in the following chapters.

a. That flood, which involved the breaking open of the fountains of the deep (Gen. 7:11) and is said to have destroyed the earth (Gen. 9:11; 2 Pet. 3:6), so restructured the geology and topography of Eden, and probably buried it under thousands of feet of sediment, that it no longer existed.¹¹⁶ God presumably had Moses include that information despite being anachronistic because it sets the creation account in its real place on earth at the time, even though that place was subsequently destroyed. And because Eden was no more, the geographical reference could not be updated to the current name of the location. Troy Lacey states:

Genesis 2:10–14 is a parenthetical portion: the narration from Genesis 2:9 is interrupted with some geographical bearings for the pre-flood reader (recall that Adam lived to see seven generations of descendants), then resumes in Genesis 2:15 with day six of the creation narrative, specifically Adam being placed in Eden by God. Moses wrote the description of Eden and the surrounding geography from the present-tense perspective of a pre-flood observer. It is possible this is because he was working from a pre-flood written record, maybe even preserving Adam's own recollection of the landscape. Therefore, Genesis 2:10–14 is most likely a post-fall but pre-flood geographical description, which was dutifully recorded by Moses without changing the verb tense.¹¹⁷

b. The rivers that watered the garden were called the Pishon, the Gihon, the Tigris, and the Euphrates, but those rivers did not continue to exist after the flood. There are no Pishon and Gihon rivers, and the post-flood rivers named the Tigris and Euphrates are not the pre-flood Tigris and Euphrates mentioned in relation to Eden. As Lacey explains:

The flood destroyed the world as Noah knew it (see 2 Peter 3:6), covering the original garden under thousands of feet of sediment. So the rivers flowing out of Eden, including the two called the Tigris and Euphrates (Genesis 2:14), cannot be the same rivers today. Also, the modern rivers come from different sources and then merge, whereas Eden's rivers came from one source and then divided into four rivers.¹¹⁸

c. Post-flood features and places were given pre-flood names by the survivors of the flood and their descendants. To quote Lacey again:

¹¹⁶ This upheaval may be reflected in Ps. 104:8: "The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them." There are echoes of the flood narrative in verses Ps. 104:6–9, and some scholars are convinced the focus shifts to the flood at verse 6. For example, David Barker, after a lengthy analysis of the psalm's setting, literary structure, and grammar, declares in "The Waters of the Earth: An Exegetical Study of Psalm 104:1–9," *Grace Theological Journal* 7.1 (1986), 80, "vv 6–9 clearly point to the Noahic deluge of Genesis 6–9 rather than the creation account of Genesis 1." See also, Jason Lisle and Tim Chaffey, "[Defense – A Local Flood?](#)" (February 2, 2012).

¹¹⁷ Troy Lacey, "[How Did Moses Know So Much About the Pre-flood World?](#)" *Answers in Depth* (November 3, 2023).

¹¹⁸ Lacey (2023).

The question naturally arises as to why the Tigris and Euphrates are now named as they are. There is an easy explanation for this. After leaving the mountains of Ararat, the post-flood settlers would have named places and landmarks based on what they already knew. This is the same reason that the United States has places named York (Pennsylvania), Moscow (Idaho), Paris (Kentucky), and Plymouth (Massachusetts), etc. These cities were named after places familiar to emigrants from England, Russia, and elsewhere. It makes perfect sense that those settling the world after the flood would have done the same thing. . . .

[I]t is much more likely that Cush and Asshur were pre-flood names of places (perhaps based on pre-flood people not named in Genesis 1–6) unrelated to the later post-flood names. In fact, the later post-flood names may have borrowed these in honor of the pre-flood ones. Moses simply recorded these pre-flood names (through direct, divine revelation) as an apparent anachronism, or he copied down and edited records recorded by Adam (and other pre-flood patriarchs).¹¹⁹

4. Two specific trees in the garden are mentioned, the "tree of life" and the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Regarding the tree of life, it seems that God bound himself to provide continuous life to humans who consumed the fruit of that particular tree (Gen. 3:22b).

a. In other words, he obligated himself to prevent them from experiencing what is known by implication in Revelation as the "first death," meaning physical death. So, when Adam and Eve sinned and were sentenced to death, they naturally were denied access to the tree of life because if they ate from it God would be bound to prevent the physical death that he just pronounced as punishment for their sin (Gen. 3:17, 19, 22b-24).

b. The tree of life reappears in Revelation's depiction of the eternal state (Rev. 2:7, 22:2, 14, 19). But there, the people, both the righteous and the wicked, have been resurrected (Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 14:15), meaning raised to bodily life after they experienced the first death, physical death. Eating from the tree of life in their case prevents them from experiencing the "second death," which is the eternal damnation depicted by the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8, 22:14).¹²⁰ Thus, only the redeemed have access to this tree in the eschaton, as only they are exempt from hell.

c. There was no command not to eat of the tree of life, but there is no mention of God telling Adam or Eve about it. The impression from Gen. 3:22b is that Adam and Eve had not eaten from the tree, but if they had, then its death-preventing effect presumably involved repeated eating, which would be impossible once access was denied.

¹¹⁹ Lacey (2023).

¹²⁰ All the condemned will be cast in the lake of fire "alive" – they share a common fate (Mat. 25:31; Rev. 14:11) – but most will be alive by way of a resurrection after having experienced death (Jn. 5:29; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:11-15). That is why the lake of fire is called the "second death" in 20:14 and 21:8. It is a "second death" in that it is a negative, sin-caused separation that follows (generally) a resurrection from the first death.

D. 2:15-25 – The forbidden tree, naming the animals, and creation of Eve

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." ¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

1. As I said, Gen. 2:7-9 and 15-25, the story of Adam and Eve's creation, which was noted summarily in 1:26-27, is reported in greater detail. Adam, who was created in 2:7, is put in the garden to work and keep it, and God commands him in vv. 16-17, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Of course, he soon breaks that command, which I will discuss in a minute.

2. In Gen. 2:18, God declares that it is not good for the man to be alone and then announces his intention to make a helper who is *fit for*, or *corresponds to*, or *pairs up* with Adam. The verse says nothing about God observing Adam's loneliness after some period of time. Rather, "[t]he narrative *begins with* the striking announcement by God that the man is not yet as God had planned [him] to be" (emphasis supplied).¹²¹ Mathews observes, "Whether the man felt his aloneness at first is not stated; only the divine viewpoint is given."¹²² Hamilton notes, "it is God who makes the judgment about the unsuitability of man's aloneness. Man is not consulted for his thoughts on the matter. At no point does man offer to God any grievance about his current circumstances."¹²³

3. God brings to Adam every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens to see what Adam would call them. As Ham, Sarfati, and Wieland point out:

Adam did not have to name *all* the animals – only those God brought to him. For instance, Adam was commanded to name "every beast of the field" (Gen. 2:20),

¹²¹ Ross (1988), 125.

¹²² Mathews (1996), 213.

¹²³ Hamilton (1990), 175.

not "beast of the earth" (Gen. 1:25). The phrase "beast of the field" is most likely a subset of the larger group "beast of the earth." He did not have to name "everything that creeps upon the earth" (Gen. 1:25), or any of the sea creatures. Also, the number of "kinds" would be much less than the number of "species" in today's classification.¹²⁴

4. In naming the animals, Adam recognized that none was a suitable helper, one "matching him." God then carries out his intention to make a helper who is fit for Adam by putting him in a deep sleep and taking a rib from him, or more literally taking a part of his side,¹²⁵ and making a woman from it.

a. He did not make another man but made a woman, a sexual counterpart to the man, and he did not make her independently from the ground as he did with Adam but made her from the bone and flesh he removed from Adam. The woman was created *from* Adam (see 1 Cor. 11:8), and she is a complementary fit to him, what New Testament scholar Robert Gagnon calls "a complementary sexual 'other.'"¹²⁶

b. When the woman is brought to Adam, he acknowledges her in 2:23 as being right or suitable for him, having been made *from him*. He declares, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." The translation that God "at last" or "finally" brought Eve before Adam does not imply that a lengthy period had elapsed. It was simply Adam's way of contrasting the new creature (woman) to the many animals that had recently been brought before him. The clause in 2:23 can just as easily be translated "This one, this time [*zō 't happa 'am*] is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."¹²⁷ Another possible reading is simply, "This time, bone of my bones . . ."¹²⁸

c. The very next verse, Gen. 2:24, declares, "*Therefore* (For this reason) a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." It is because of the complementary fit of man and woman based on the fact the woman was created out of the man that man and woman join back together in the sexual union of marriage. Male and female are "perfect fits" from the standpoint of divine design and blessing; male and male, or female and female, are not.

d. This justification for male-female union – this complementarity that is rooted in the woman coming out of the man – is a thread running through criticisms in Scripture of same-sex intercourse as "contrary to nature," meaning contrary to God's creative design and intention. From this foundation in Genesis, the Bible is a thoroughly heterosexual book. As

¹²⁴ Ken Ham, Jonathan Sarfati, and Carl Wieland, *The Revised & Expanded Answers Book*, ed. Don Batten (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2000), 46-47. According to Mathews (1996), 215, "The creatures are named within three broad categories: domesticated 'livestock,' 'birds,' and 'beasts of the field' (cf. 3:1)."

¹²⁵ NET note states: "Traditionally translated 'rib,' the Hebrew word actually means 'side.' The Hebrew text reads, 'and he took one from his sides,' which could be rendered 'part of his sides.' That idea may fit better the explanation by the man that the woman is his flesh and bone."

¹²⁶ Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2001), 61.

¹²⁷ Wenham (1987), 70; Hamilton (1990), 179-180.

¹²⁸ Mathews (1996), 218.

Gagnon summarizes the matter, "Indeed, every narrative, law, proverb, exhortation, poetry, and metaphor in the pages of Scripture that has anything to do with sexual relations presupposes a male-female prerequisite for sexual relations and marriage."¹²⁹

e. The Lord Jesus appealed to this Genesis text in Mat. 19:4-6 (Mk. 10:6-9) in responding to the Pharisees' question about divorce. He says it is *because* God created two sexes in the beginning, made mankind male and female, that a man and woman are joined by God in the one-flesh union of marriage, and having been so joined are not to be separated by divorce. According to Jesus, marriage and the sexual intimacy that are part of it are intended by God to be between the two sexes he created in the beginning.

f. God's aversion to any obscuring of the male and female sexual differences that he established at creation is evident in the prohibition of cross-dressing in Deut. 22:5. It states: "A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God." If the male-female distinction is so fundamental that disregarding or camouflaging it by dressing like the opposite sex is sinful, then certainly disregarding the male-female distinction by taking the role of the opposite sex in sexual intercourse is sinful.

5. The fact God created the man first indicates that the leadership responsibility in the physical family and spiritual community was placed on men by God in the beginning. In 1 Tim. 2:11-12, Paul restricts women leading in the church, teaching or having authority over men, and then in 2:13 he grounds that restriction on the fact Adam was formed first, then Eve. He does not explain *how* Adam's being created first supports the restriction, but the notion of the "firstborn" being the leader required no explanation in the first century.¹³⁰ The leadership right of the firstborn is all over the OT and was taken for granted.¹³¹ So by creating the man first, God

¹²⁹ Robert A. J. Gagnon, "[Truncated Love: A Response to Andrew Marin's Love Is an Orientation Part 1](#)," retrieved on 1/8/26.

¹³⁰ As Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker observe about v. 13 in *The First and Second Letters of Timothy*, ECC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 227, "it is notable that its argument is not expanded upon but, for all its brevity, is taken for granted as familiar and immediately intelligible."

¹³¹ Gen. 25:29-33, 27:1-40, 43:33; Deut. 21:15-17; 1 Chron. 5:1. See, James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 207-209. Jacob Neusner states in *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 228, "The laws of primogeniture mandate for firstborn sons a special blessing and a double portion of inheritance (Deut. 21:15-17; see also, Gen. 25:29-34), regardless of the father's greater affection for another wife and/or her children. The firstborn also receives authority over other family members (Gen. 27)." As Robert Foster observes in *Renaming Abraham's Children* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 131 (fn. 49), "The tension that propels Genesis's narrative requires primogeniture as the societal 'default' setting." He explains (p. 131), "According to convention, Ishmael, as the firstborn should stand to inherit the family goods, or at least – in the formulation of Deut. 21:15-17 – a double portion thereof. Genesis presupposes a knowledge of this institution for the rhetorical effect of its subversion." Kyu Seop Kim states in *The Firstborn Son in Ancient Judaism And Early Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 138:

In Greco-Roman society, the eldest had a higher status than his younger brothers. In *Moralia* 486F-487A, Plutarch exhorts that the eldest brother should take primacy in every matter over his other brothers. . . . In Demosthenes, *Against Macartatus* 43.74, the eldest son was named after his grandfather because the name was fitting for the eldest son (ὡσπερ καὶ δικαίον ἐστίν), and it implies that the eldest son had some distinct status. The order of age contained a crucial cultural value in Greco-Roman society. Seniority was often associated with some higher status within human relationships. In *Sacr* 77, Philo states, "By 'elder' is meant he that is worthy of honour and privilege and high place." Thus, the order of age was significant

was expressing his intention to put the leadership responsibility on the man. That is how Paul would have expected to be and would have been heard. To claim otherwise is to ignore the social context of the letter. As Schreiner observes, "When Paul said that women should not teach because Adam was created first, the readers of 1 Timothy would not have scratched their heads with perplexity and amazement. To the original readers, the priority of Adam in creation would naturally have suggested his authority over Eve."¹³²

6. The fact the woman is described in Gen. 2:18, 20 as a helper fit or suitable for Adam is a further indication in the creation account of male leadership. It is true that "helper" often is used of God, but the word itself says nothing about the kind of helper intended. As Stephen Clark notes, "to focus on the word by itself, without considering its context in the phrase and in the passage, is not very helpful. The actual phrase says that God created woman to be a help for man; that is, the purpose of her creation was to be a help to the man. Taken in its context, there is clearly some sort of subordination indicated by the phrase as a whole."¹³³ John Piper and Wayne Grudem elaborate:

The context must decide whether Eve is to "help" as a strong person who aids a weaker one, or as one who assists a loving leader. The context makes it very unlikely that "helper" should be read on the analogy of God's help, because in Genesis 2:19-20 Adam is caused to seek his "helper" first among the animals. But the animals will not do, because they are not "fit for him." So God makes woman "from man." Now there is a being who is "fit for him," sharing his human nature, equal to him in God-like personhood. She is infinitely different from an animal, and God highlights her value to man by showing how no animal can fill her role. Yet in passing through "helpful" animals to woman, God teaches us that the woman is a man's "helper" in the sense of a loyal and suitable assistant in the life of the garden.¹³⁴

7. Before rebelling against God by eating the fruit, Adam and Eve were naked and were not ashamed (Gen. 2:25). But as we will see, after rebelling, they became conscious of their nakedness (their eyes were opened) and fashioned loincloths from fig leaves to cover themselves (Gen. 3:7). The point is not that they came to recognize that their nakedness was sinful and therefore something of which they should be ashamed. Their nakedness was not sinful. After all, they were husband and wife, were the only humans on earth, and had been commanded to procreate. Rather, their discomfort with their nakedness was a reflection of their guilt for sinning. Their sense of shame translated into a desire to cover their nakedness, as though covering their bodies would conceal their sin.

in the Greco-Roman world and related to singular qualities. The older brother had a higher rank amongst his brothers, and the seniority of the older brother was respected by his younger siblings.

¹³² Thomas R. Schreiner, "An Interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:9-15" in Andreas Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, eds., *Women in the Church*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 203.

¹³³ Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1980), 24 (fn. 40).

¹³⁴ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, "Clarity, Charity, and Hope: The Controversy and the Cause of Christ" in John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Womanhood & Manhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 408-409. As I indicated, Paul makes clear in 1 Cor. 11:9 that this is the second element of the woman's nonreciprocal glorification of man. Not only was she created *from him* but she also was created *on account of him*.

IV. Chapter Three

A. 3:1-8 – Temptation and the Fall

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

1. Mankind, male and female, is created in the image, the likeness, of God that they may rule over (*rādā*) all the earth on God's behalf, rule as his representatives (Gen. 1:26-27; Ps. 8:4-8). Since ruling involves making judgments, choosing between alternatives, ruling the subhuman creation *as God's representatives*, in keeping with his righteous character, requires some moral knowledge to distinguish good ruling of creation from that which is wrong, contrary to God's character. Even though sin was not yet in the world, not yet actualized, to rule righteously requires knowledge of what *would constitute* ruling unrighteously. Managing creation for selfish gain without regard for harm caused to others or with needless cruelty or destruction of resources would qualify.

2. The point is that knowledge of good and evil is tied to the notion of ruling. As David VanDrunen explains:

The use of the phrase "knowing good and evil" and related expressions elsewhere in the OT provides strong evidence for interpreting this idea in a royal-judicial sense in Genesis 2–3. The attribution of knowledge of good and evil to the two great Israelite kings, David and Solomon, provides the clearest evidence that such knowledge is the particular province of monarchs as they render judgment. 2 Samuel 14 describes a ruse by Joab to restore Absalom to the presence of his father David. Joab sends a wise woman from Tekoa to present a concocted judicial appeal to the king. In the course of her conversation with David the woman states, "your servant thought, 'The word of my lord the king will set me at rest,' for my lord the king is like the angel of God to discern [know]

good and evil" (14:17). Here the phrase refers to a king's judicial decision that grants relief to a person bereft of justice. The same is true in 1 Kings 3. Solomon initially asks for wisdom in order to *judge* [לשפט] God's people, "that I may discern between good and evil" (3:9). After his wise judicial ruling involving the two women claiming the same living child, the people "perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice" (3:28). Thus the recognition that he does justice is evidence that God has answered Solomon's request for wisdom to *discern good and evil*. . . . In light of the immediate context – particularly God's exercise of judicial authority as a king seated in the midst of his heavenly court and the human commission to exercise dominion – it is compelling to understand the references to "knowing good and evil" in Genesis 2–3 in line with this common OT meaning of the phrase.¹³⁵

3. The "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:9, 17) that God created presumably was a tree whose fruit would, by God's will and work, enhance one's knowledge of those things, one's moral perspicuity, and therefore was something that could enhance mankind's ability to rule rightly. And yet, God states unequivocally that the fruit of this tree is *not* to be eaten (Gen. 2:17, 3:11, 17). He apparently wants the humans to rule with the sufficient but less complete knowledge of good and evil that they have by virtue of being created in his image.

4. Given that mankind is to rule over creation and that greater knowledge of what constitutes good and evil can be beneficial in that task, the command not to eat the fruit tests whether mankind will trust the judgment of God and obey his decrees even when they appear by human lights to be misguided. Will mankind second guess God and choose what it thinks is best in view of its assignment or accept its limitations as a mere creature and submit to God even when his purpose and rationale in forbidding the fruit are not known?

5. The serpent (snake) was one of the beasts of the field that God had created but was more cunning than all the others, as demonstrated in his interaction with Eve. Later revelation makes clear this is because he was animated by Satan (Jn. 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9, 20:2).

a. Arnold Fruchtenbaum states:

The serpent is a reference to both a literal serpent and to Satan, for Satan used a literal serpent by indwelling the serpent for the purpose of communicating with the woman. The fact that the serpent and Satan are one is borne out in the New Testament in three places: 2 Corinthians 11:3 and Revelation 12:9 and 20:2. Satan did not merely take the form of the serpent, but indwelled a serpent and communicated with the woman through the serpent. The identification of Satan with the serpent is not merely the New Testament perspective but is also the rabbinic view.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ David VanDrunen, *Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 63-64.

¹³⁶ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, Ariel's Bible Commentary (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2009), 91-92.

b. Since all things other than God were created by God in the beginning, during the creation week, Satan was created during that time. Indeed, Col. 1:16 stresses that all things, including all spirit beings, were created by God through Christ: "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him." We know from Gen. 1:31 that all of creation was originally "very good," and we also know from many passages of Scripture that demons are evil and unclean. From this, we can deduce that demons were originally created good and then turned against God.

c. We are not told when this angel rebellion occurred, but it apparently happened between Gen. 1:31, where God pronounces all of creation very good, and Gen. 3:1-5, where Satan, through a serpent, tempts Eve to sin. Many people, often guided by what I judge to be misinterpretations of Isa. 14:12-15 and Ezek. 28:11-19, claim that the angels (Satan in particular) fell because of pride, greed, lust, or ambition, but as far as I can tell, we are not told why they fell. I think the most that can be said is that God granted the angels free will to determine whether to seek their fulfillment in him or in themselves, and some chose the latter.

d. If they were created with a superior innate knowledge of God, their rebellion was done with a full awareness, with "eyes wide open," and thus was a final and definitive choice, analogous to Christians who in their clear and measured rebellion fall beyond the point of restoration (Heb. 6:4-6). That being so, they were from that point forward implacable foes; that die had been cast.

e. The fall of Satan and other angels raises the question of why God gave them the freedom to choose their own way if he foreknew the evil and suffering that would follow. All I can say is that, as in the case of mankind, God wanted them (like us) to choose him from within a certain epistemological environment, from within a state that offered a certain perception and knowledge of him. To provide that choice was necessarily to provide the potential for rejection. But foreseeing that culpable rebellion, God was able to incorporate it into his ultimate purpose and goal.

6. Though animated by Satan (Jn. 8:44; Rev. 12:9, 20:2), the serpent was a beast over which mankind had divinely delegated authority (Gen. 1:26, 3:1). Satan, through the serpent, misrepresents what God had said, asking if he had prohibited them from eating from *any tree* in the Garden (Gen. 3:1), implying that it would be unreasonable or outrageous for him to do so. He then directly contradicts God's warning about the consequences of disobeying him. God said they "*shall* surely die" (Gen. 2:17), but Satan assures Eve they "*will not* surely die" (Gen. 3:4). Notice how he shifts the focus from the straightforward commandment – "you shall not eat" – to what the consequences will be if one eats the fruit. He is a master of misdirection.

7. The serpent then entices Eve by misrepresenting what eating the forbidden fruit will provide to her. He assures her that eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil will make her "*like God*, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5), meaning that she would then know *all things*, as God knows all things. He cleverly pretends that "good and evil" in reference to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a merism, a phrase meaning *all knowledge*, good

and evil and everything in between, and thus presents it as a tree of omniscience. But that is a lie. God did not say that one who ate of it would become like God in that he or she would know all things; he said only that it was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and they were forbidden to eat from it. By tolerating the serpent's evil, by failing to rebuke or eject the serpent despite having authority over it, Adam allowed him to seduce Eve, and then him, to eat the forbidden fruit.

8. In addition to the fact Adam was created first, in 1 Tim. 2:14 Paul gives as additional support for male leadership the fact that Eve rather than Adam was the one deceived, meaning the one deceived *by the serpent*. He is not suggesting women are innately more gullible than men and therefore incompetent to teach or have authority. The idea seems to be that, since Satan is the father of lies and a deceitful schemer, his treating Eve as the leader by engaging only with her is evidence that she was in fact *not* the leader. Rather, Satan was subverting the divinely ordained pattern of leadership for his evil purpose.

9. As I noted earlier, after they sinned, Adam and Eve became uncomfortable with their nakedness, as a reflection of their guilt for sinning. Their sense of shame translated into a desire to cover their nakedness, as though covering their bodies would conceal their sin. Their sense of alienation from God was so profound that they could no longer bear to be in the presence of the divine theophany, the apparently routine manifestation of God as a being walking in the garden in the cool of the day (probably late evening), so they tried to hide from his presence. That is sin's effect on fellowship with God.

B. 3:9-13 – God confronts Adam and Eve

⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

1. God, of course, knows where Adam is, but he calls on him to reveal his location. Adam understands that his abnormal behavior of hiding requires an explanation, and he says that he hid, sought to avoid God, because he was afraid, and he was afraid because he was naked. He recognized that concealing his body with a loincloth of fig leaves still left him naked, exposed before God as a rebel, and he was afraid of what that would mean. As stated in Heb. 4:13: "And there is not a creature hidden before him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom our account [is given]."

2. God knows that no one told Adam he was naked but that his consciousness of being naked was a transferred sense of being uncovered before God in his state of guilt, so God invites him to confess his sin by asking, "Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" Adam admits his wrong, that he did in fact eat of the forbidden tree, but in classic

human fashion, he seeks to deflect or diminish his culpability by spreading the blame. He says that Eve gave him the fruit, and by the way, you gave me Eve. So he not so subtly tries to throw both Eve and God under the bus.

3. When God asks Eve to give an account of her culpability in the matter, she does the same. She admits that she ate of the forbidden fruit tries to minimize it by blaming the serpent for having deceived her.

C. 3:14-21 – God metes out the consequences

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." ¹⁶ To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you." ¹⁷ And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." ²⁰ The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

1. God reveals in 3:14 that he cursed not only the serpent who was used to induce the sin but all the livestock and all the beasts of the field. This is implicit in the statement the serpent was cursed "more than" (NEB, NAS, NKJV, NASU, HCSB, LEB, ISV, CSB) or "above" (KJV, ERV, ASV, RSV, NET, NIV, ESV) those other animals. Michael Murray says, "The implication of the passage is that the effects of the curse on the Serpent are simply more profound than the curse directed at the rest of the organisms in nature."¹³⁷ In Sailhamer's words, he is "the most cursed of the animals."¹³⁸ Robert Davidson says, "The opening words look back to the beginning of chapter 3. Just as the serpent was 'more crafty' (3:1) than any wild creature, so now he is *accursed more than all cattle and all wild creatures* (verse 14)."¹³⁹ Ross remarks, "A comparison used in the construction shows that the serpent would be cursed more than the rest of the animals. All creation would now lie under a curse, but the serpent more so for his part in the crime."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Michael J. Murray, *Nature Red in Tooth & Claw: Theism and the Problem of Animal Suffering* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 75.

¹³⁸ John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis" in Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, eds., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 1:90.

¹³⁹ Robert Davidson, *Genesis 1-11*, CBC (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 44.

¹⁴⁰ Ross (1988), 145.

2. The Lord curses the serpent by consigning it to crawl on its belly in the dust all the days of its life.

a. Since this is punishment for its role in the episode, it makes no sense to claim the serpent already was crawling on its belly and the curse simply made its continuing to do so a sign of judgment. In that case, its crawling would function as a sign of escaping judgment! The Lord is imposing this condition on the serpent, changing its mode of locomotion, and the readers are assumed to understand that this change was unpleasant and thus punitive.

b. Keil declares: "If these words are not to be robbed of their entire meaning, they cannot be understood in any other way than as denoting that the form and movements of the serpent were altered, and that its present repulsive shape is the effect of the curse pronounced upon it, though we cannot form any accurate idea of its original appearance."¹⁴¹ Skinner states, "The assumption undoubtedly is that originally the serpent moved erect . . ."¹⁴² Otto Procksch says of the serpent, "Its earlier way of life appears to have been different."¹⁴³ Theodor Vriezen states, "The presumption clearly is that in primeval time the serpent walked upright on paws."¹⁴⁴ Sarna comments, "This reflects a popular notion, often reflected in the art of the ancient Near East, that the serpent originally walked erect. Having arrogantly aggrandized itself in a challenge to God, it is now permanently doomed to a posture of abject humiliation."¹⁴⁵ Kenneth Gangel and Stephen Bramer say, "The curse would result in the physical condition of the snake changing (you will crawl on your belly) . . ."¹⁴⁶ Longman states, "The serpent is cursed first in terms of its mode of locomotion. When the serpent first appeared in the garden, apparently it walked on legs and spoke, an appropriate symbol of the force of chaos and evil."¹⁴⁷ This was understood by ancient interpreters, but various modern pressures make us resistant to that straightforward reading.

3. The first clause of Gen. 3:15 ("I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring/seed and her offspring/seed") speaks of the origin of the conflict between humans and snakes, the dislike and aversion that humans generally have for snakes.¹⁴⁸

a. Snakes can bring death, disfigurement, and disability to humans, so most people in the world have little tolerance for them.¹⁴⁹ Since there was no human death prior to Adam's sinning (Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 5:21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22), their capacity to kill is traceable to this judgment. They were altered at that time to become deadly.

¹⁴¹ Keil and Delitzsch (2006), 1:62.

¹⁴² Skinner (1910), 78

¹⁴³ Cited Westermann (1984), 259.

¹⁴⁴ Cited in Westermann (1984), 259.

¹⁴⁵ Sarna (1989), 27.

¹⁴⁶ Kenneth O. Gangel and Stephen J. Bramer, *Genesis*, HOTC (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2002), 44.

¹⁴⁷ Longman III (2016), 66.

¹⁴⁸ Wenham (1987), 79, 89, says: "The human race, 'her offspring,' and the serpent race, 'your offspring,' will be forever at loggerheads. . . . snakes will fight a running battle with mankind as each tries to destroy the other."

¹⁴⁹ According to a World Health Organization, "Around 81,000 to 138,000 people die each year as a result of snake bites, and around three times as many amputations and other permanent disabilities are caused by snakebites annually." "[Snakebite envenoming](#)" (September 12, 2023) (retrieved on 1/9/26).

b. This conflict between humans and snakes, something with which ancient Israelites were very familiar (Eccles. 10:8; Amos 5:29; Acts 28:3-6), is a perpetual and stark representation and reminder of the conflict between humans and physical creation that was introduced into the world by the Satan-induced rebellion against God. It epitomizes that conflict with creation, that consequence of Satan's work, and thus also symbolizes Satan's opposition to mankind.¹⁵⁰

4. The second clause of 3:15 ("he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel") alludes to that deeper, harmony-destroying conflict between Satan and mankind to which the enmity God created between humans and physical snakes points. It speaks of one man (he, singular), a descendant of Eve, who shall bruise the head of *the serpent* (your, singular) *not* that of the serpent's offspring.¹⁵¹ The conflict between Satan and mankind that is symbolized in the decreed conflict between humans and snakes ends with Christ, the God-man, prevailing over Satan, the fallen spirit-being who animated the serpent in the garden.

5. The curse upon the woman in Gen. 3:16a in some way alters her body that she and all subsequent women experience in childbirth pain that they otherwise would not have experienced. Whether stress on tissues during birth was increased, nerve receptors or pathways were altered, endorphin production was decreased, or some other biological/physiological change was introduced, the pain imposed on childbirth and the transmission of that condition to subsequent generations constitutes a change of the natural world.

6. God tells Eve in 3:16b that her "desire" will be for her husband, probably meaning that in her now sin-corrupted, fallen nature she will desire to control her husband, to reject his leadership right (see the use of "desire" in Gen. 4:7), contrary to God's created order.¹⁵² The word "desire" (*tēšūqâ*) appears only three times in the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 3:16, 4:7; Song 7:11), and the occurrence in the very next chapter (4:7) clearly carries the sense of sin *seeking to control* Cain. Referring to a well-known 1975 paper by Susan Foh, David Talley states in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, "[Foh's] conclusion that the desire is a contention for leadership, a negative usage, seems probable for Gen 3:16."¹⁵³ Thus, NET renders the phrase, "You will want to control your husband." ESV has "Your desire shall be *contrary* to your husband."

7. God adds in the last clause of v. 16 that this fallen desire generally will go unsatisfied because the husband has the leadership role ("but he will rule over you"). If that is the correct understanding, then in claiming that male leadership is a sinful corruption of God's

¹⁵⁰ I am aware that many understand the serpent's offspring in the first clause to be a reference to humans who take after Satan in character, those who are his "sons" in that figurative sense (see, e.g., Mat. 13:38; Jn. 8:44; Acts 13:10). What steers me away from that understanding of the text is that Eve seems an odd representative of the people of God, the faithful human lineage, given that she is described as the mother of *all* the living in 3:20 and the statement is in the context of her rebellion.

¹⁵¹ See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 39-40.

¹⁵² Susan T. Foh, *Women & the Word of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 68-69; Susan T. Foh, "[What Is the Woman's Desire?](#)" *Westminster Theological Journal* 37 (Spring 1975), 376-383; Hurley (1981), 218-219; C. John Collins, "What Happened to Adam and Eve?" *Presbyterion* 27 (Spring 2001): 36-37.

¹⁵³ David Talley, "תְּשׁוּקָה" in Willem A. VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 341.

intention, egalitarians unwittingly are aiding and abetting women in their rebellion against God's true intention.

8. Adam is told in 3:17-19 that *the ground itself* is cursed because of his disobedience, and as a result, it now would yield "thorns and thistles." The ground will be in rebellion to mankind as mankind is in rebellion to God, so that toilsome labor, pain and the sweat of his face, will be required for it to provide lifegiving food, a state that will continue until his now certain physical death, his return to dust. And as the Spirit makes clear much later in Rom. 8:19-23, the effect of this Fall was cosmic in scope; all creation was subjected to futility and subjected to the bondage of corruption.

a. Paul says in Rom. 5:12 that sin entered into the human world or realm through Adam and that death entered through sin. Death followed as the byproduct of sin. Adam, the first man, is held responsible for introducing this plague into the human experience; he is what epidemiologists call "ground zero." Paul is well aware that Eve sinned first (2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14), but Adam is the representative of mankind in salvation history.

b. Death came to Adam as God's righteous judgment on sin. God imposed the death penalty, which involved spiritual, physical, and eternal death. John Stott says Paul's statement that death entered the world through sin "is an allusion to Genesis 2:17 and 3:19, where death (both physical and spiritual) is said to have been the penalty for disobedience (cf. 1:32; 6:23)."¹⁵⁴ Adam Harwood likewise remarks, "The most significant consequence of sin is death, both physical and spiritual death."¹⁵⁵

c. Adam died spiritually on the day he sinned in that he was immediately alienated from God, the source of all life (e.g., Isa. 59:2; Deut. 31:17-18; Ps. 34:16; Prov. 15:29; Jer. 5:24-25; Mic. 3:4; Hab. 1:13; Eph. 2:1-2; Col. 2:13). But he also died physically that day, as promised in Gen. 2:17, in the sense that from that day God would not sustain physical human life continuously. God's prevention of physical death was conditioned on Adam not sinning, so when he sinned, God withdrew that conditional grant, and mankind became unconditionally mortal. From that day, Adam was a dead man walking; all humanity was doomed to die physically.

9. Adam and Eve's rebellion against God introduced the sin-plague into the human world thus spoiling the very good creation. God did not scrap the sin-infected creation and start anew but instead chose to redeem it, to rescue it from the consequences of sin's invasion. He cursed the natural world as part of his cursing of mankind so that it now resists mankind's use and purposes, as mankind resists God's, making survival a chore instead of an unmitigated joy. It is now a dystopian world stalked by toil, predation, disease, pain, suffering, sorrow, and death.

a. The curse God imposed in response to sin was intended not only as punishment but as the background necessary *in a sin-invaded creation* to optimize his appeal to sinners. In other words, the pervasive reality of the curse is needed in this sin-tainted world to reinforce, subliminally if not consciously, the truth that choosing sin over God yields disaster. Even the revolting horrors sprinkled throughout the natural world serve to keep fresh before

¹⁵⁴ John Stott, *Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 150.

¹⁵⁵ Adam Harwood, *Christian Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2022), 349.

mankind the horror of sin, to provide an ongoing, visceral display of the tragic consequences of rejecting God. It is a way of communicating to the emotional and subconscious side of mankind that this world is not the way it is supposed to be, which impression is part of the epistemological environment in which God calls humans to choose him.

b. And since God desires a great multitude of redeemed humans to spend eternity with him in the new heavens and new earth, the cursed creation must continue until that full number has been reached. To that end, the elements of the curse were designed and arranged to sustain the functionality of the biosphere for that length of time. In this way, even fallen creation reflects God's wisdom and glory. As part of his counteraction against sin's invasion, he has cursed creation in such a way that a world red in tooth and claw will continue for however many millennia are necessary for his purpose. Thus, God remains the ultimate source of provision for all his creatures in this fallen world, predators included, and rightly is praised for it, as well as for the integration of parts and ongoing balance of the entire system of nature.

c. Creation continues to serve and glorify God, but because it now does so with the inclusion of remedial evil, in a way necessitated by sin, its current functioning is at odds with God's initial provision and eternal vision. In that sense, the cursed creation can be viewed as an enemy, as something opposed to God, even though he was its source and rules over it. The coexistence of these differing perspectives is made clear in the case of human death. God, in his righteousness, and thus to his glory, imposed death on mankind because of sin (Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 5:21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22), and yet death is identified as "the last enemy" to be expunged from this corrupted creation (1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:4).

d. Without knowing just how the curse functions as a necessary background for God's purpose in this sin-invaded creation, we are in no position to assert with confidence that there is gratuitous suffering in or through nature. And attributing death and suffering to God's curse for sin does not make God responsible for death and suffering in the same way he would be if he employed death and suffering as a means of original creation. In the former, God is working for the good purpose of counteracting the effects of mankind's rebellion; in the latter, he is choosing to introduce suffering and death in the first instance, with no situational constraint.¹⁵⁶ That distinction has moral significance.

10. Adam names his wife Eve because she is mother of all living, meaning that all subsequent human beings will descend from her. She and Adam were the founding couple of all humanity. Mathews remarks, "She is the 'mother of all living,' for all human life will have its source in her body."¹⁵⁷ The NET note explains, "The name *Eve* means 'Living one' or 'Life-giver' in Hebrew." As the genetic diversity that God included in Adam and Eve, which he may have maxed out, was sorted through segregation of the population, mutated through the generations, and passed through the population bottleneck of Noah's flood, the singular human bloodline differentiated into all the various racial and ethnic groups that have existed. But despite all the variation, we are all one huge family, the one human race.

¹⁵⁶ It is consistent with God's omnipotence to believe it is *logically impossible* for him to optimize his appeal to sinners in a sin-invaded world without employing the background of the cursed creation. Logical impossibilities are not subject to power.

¹⁵⁷ Mathews (1996), 254.

11. As reported in 3:21, the Lord clothed Adam and Eve with garments of animal skin, which with hindsight we can see symbolizes that the remedy for human sin is beyond human effort; the loincloths of fig leaves did nothing. Mankind's sin can only be removed from God's sight by God, which he will do through a sacrifice.¹⁵⁸ The animals from whom the skins for the coverings were obtained thus were a type, the ultimate antitype of which would be the male descendant of Eve alluded to in Gen. 3:15, the Lord Jesus Christ.

D. 3:22-24 – Expulsion from the garden

²² Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand ^band take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever-- " ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

1. When God says in Gen. 3:22a, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil," he is not saying that the serpent's word had come to pass, that by eating the forbidden fruit humanity had become omniscient like God. That is certainly false, as shown by Scripture, history, and universal experience. Rather, he is saying that in defying the express commandment not to eat of that tree mankind had *acted like God's equal* in terms of knowing good and evil, in terms of being capable of and entitled to judge whether the fruit of that particular tree should be available for their eating. They overrode God's judgment, claiming by their action to be his equal, to know as he knows, and therefore not to be subject to his will. It is the perennial and fundamental temptation of mankind, to usurp the prerogative of God.

2. As I previously explained regarding the tree of life, it seems that God bound himself to provide continuous life to humans who consumed the fruit of that particular tree. In other words, he obligated himself to prevent them from experiencing what is known by implication in Revelation as the "first death," meaning physical death. So, when Adam and Eve sinned and were sentenced to death, they naturally were denied access to the tree of life because if they ate from it God would be bound to prevent their physical death. So they are driven from the garden and prevented from returning.

3. We are not told precisely how long Adam and Eve were in the garden before they sinned and were expelled, but it could not have been very long. Adam and Eve were created sinless and were commanded to procreate (Gen. 1:28), so they would have begun engaging in sexual intercourse soon thereafter. Given that they were created in perfect health, as implied by the pronouncement that the completed creation was "very good," Eve would have conceived a

¹⁵⁸ Kenneth A. Mathews states in *Genesis I-II*, CSB (Brentwood, TN: Holman Reference, 2022), 208, "Although the text does not specify that animals were slain to provide these coverings, it is a fair *implication* and one that likely would be made by the Mosaic community, given that animal sacrifice was pervasive in the tabernacle. . . . Sacrifice [at the tabernacle] renewed and guaranteed the special union of God with his people (e.g., Day of Atonement, Lev 16)."

child in short order. And yet, they had already sinned and been expelled from the garden when their first child, Cain, was conceived (Gen. 3:6, 3:24-4:1).