

**A THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF
TEN MAJOR CREATION THEORIES**

by

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ABSTRACT

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What does the Bible say God did when He created the heavens and the earth? The study begins by investigating genres of creation texts and stating hermeneutical principles. The claims of ten creation theories are evaluated by Bible creation texts. The ten creation theories investigated are: pre-creation chaos, initial chaos, title or summary, young earth scientific creationism, theistic big bang, old earth day-age progressive creation, literary framework, creation revealed in six days, gap or ruin-restoration, and historical land (Eden/Promised Land) creationism. The most exegetically supported claims of the ten theories suggest a combined eleventh theory. Four diagnostic questions sort all eleven theories into groups. The questions are: Does the Genesis 1 text indicate the days were six daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle days, or six long day-age geologic eras? Did God create orderly cosmos and unfinished earth during the beginning, or was there chaos God transformed into cosmos in the six days? Were the stated life kinds created once, or twice? Did God create the heavens and earth in the beginning, or *in* the six days? The eleven theories are evaluated by Bible creation texts related to the question, and theories with claims counter to the creation texts are progressively eliminated. Only the eleventh combined theory emerges. Finally the most exegetically supported claims of the ten theories are correlated into a fully described eleventh combined creation theory—two-stage Biblical creation (2SBC). Stage one: In the beginning time (*rē'shîṭ* inherently means a time period) God created the heavens and the earth; but at the end of that time, earth was declared uninhabitable, uninhabited, and darkened. The perspective of the apparent Narrator of stage two was established. Stage two: By eight command units involving six day-night-cycle workdays God made planet earth lighted, habitable, and inhabited. (The Bible neither explicitly affirms nor explicitly denies time passage between the days, so caution is urged with Payne's proposal.) The *tôl' dôt* (colophon?) in Genesis 2:4a ends the two-part narrative. Since the length of the beginning time is unstated by the Bible, two-stage Biblical creation claims a Biblically undated universe and earth creation (UEC).

Key Words: creation, Genesis, *bara*, hermeneutics, chaos, *yom*, day-age, young-earth, old-earth, Waltke, Sailhamer, Morris, Ross

Opsomming

‘n Teologiese evaluering van tien belangrike skeppingsteorieë

Wat het God gedoen toe Hy volgens die Bybel hemel en aarde geskape het? Die studie neem ‘n aanvang deur die genres van skeppingstekste te ondersoek en ook die hermeneutiese beginsels neer te lê. Die aansprake van tien skeppingstekste word in die lig van Skrifgegewens ontleed. Die tien teorieë wat ondersoek word is: die sogenaamde pre-skeppings chaos, aanvanklike chaos, titel of opsomming, jong aarde wetenskaplike kreasionisme, teïstiese groot ontploffingsteorie, ou aarde dag-ouderom progressiewe skepping, literêre raamwerk skepping geopenbaar in ses dae, gaping of ruïne herstel en historiese land (Eden/beloofde land kreasionisme). Volgens die kandidaat doen die aansprake wat eksegeties die beste ondersteun is ‘n gekombineerde elfde teorie aan die hand. Al elf teorieë is met behulp van vier diagnostiese vrae in groepe ingedeel. Die vrae is: verwys Genesis een na dae en nagte wat aangedui kan word as dag/nag/ oggend/aand siklusse of verwys dit na ses lang dag tydperke van geologiese tydperke? Het God ‘n ordelike kosmos daargestel en onvoltooide aarde aan die begin of het daar reeds chaos bestaan wat God gevorm het in die kosmos in die ses dae? Is die betaansoorte twee keer geskape of slegs een keer? Het God hemel en aarde in die begin geskape of in ses dae? Hierdie groepe is daarna met behulp van Bybelse skeppingstekste, wat met elke vraag verband hou, geëvalueer. Teorieë met aansprake wat met die skeppingstekste bots, is progressief geëlimineer. Die aansprake wat eksegeties die beste ondersteun is, is daarna in ‘n volledig beskryfde, gekombineerde elfde skeppingsteorie byeengebring – tweefase Bybelse skepping (2FBS). Fase een: In die begintyd (*rē’shīt* beteken ‘n periode van tyd) het God hemel en aarde geskape, maar aan die einde van tyd het hy die aarde as onbewoonbaar, onbewoon en duister verklaar. Die perspektief van die implisiete verteller is vasgestel. Fase twee: Deur agt bevele wat ses dag/nag siklusse in werksdae veronderstel het God die aarde verlig en bewoonbaar en bewoon gemaak. (Die Bybel bevestig nie, maar ontken ook nie, tydsprong tussen die verskillende dae nie, daarom moet versigtig omgegaan word met Payne se voorstel.) Die *tôl’dôt* in Genesis 2:4a beëindig die tweeledige narratief. Aangesien die tydsduur aan die begin nie vasgestel is in die Bybel nie, veronderstel twee-fase Bybelse skepping ‘n ongedateerde Bybelse heelal en aardse skepping (OBS)

Kernbegrippe: Skepping, genesis, *bara*, hermeneutiek, chaos, *yom*, dag-ouderdom, jong aarde, ou aarde, Waltke, Sailhamer, Morris, Ross.

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PART ONE—QUESTIONS AND APPROACH

Biblical creation is a rather broad subject. The exact question being addressed by this study will be stated. Then the approach to answering that question will be explained.

CHAPTER 1

THE QUESTION BEING INVESTIGATED AND THE APPROACH BEING TAKEN

At least ten major and over a dozen more minor creation theories from the Bible have been in circulation within Christian circles. Interaction between advocates of different theories has been dominated by attack against opposing theories. Such a lack of consensus and cooperation suggests that creation theories have been developed more in a spirit of competition than in a corporate hermeneutical spiral toward a combined theory.¹

THE QUESTION BEING INVESTIGATED

“What does the Bible say that God did when He created the heavens and the earth?”

The approach of this study to answer that question is to identify and analyze the claims of these ten major theories of the creation of the heavens and the earth in order to seek the most exegetically supported claims. The author of this study has exegeted from the Hebrew and Greek five major and over one hundred shorter creation texts. The claims made by the ten creation theories will be compared to this Bible data. Finally, in the spirit of the corporate hermeneutical spiral, the most exegetically supported claims from all ten creation theories will be combined with the results of the exegesis of the creation texts to develop a combined eleventh theory. The ultimate goal of this investigation is that within the corporate hermeneutical spiral, the combined theory may approach a little closer to answering the question, “What does the Bible say that God did when He created the heavens and the earth?”

Gee die God van die hemel heerlijkheid.

¹ Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

QUESTIONS NOT BEING INVESTIGATED

The question that this study addresses is not about ancient near eastern (ANE) creation mythology or a comparison of ANE creation myths with the Bible account of creation or who borrowed from whom. The question does not address creation versus evolution. Neither does it focus on science and the Bible. The question is not a historical-critical, source, redaction, text, or other criticism of the early chapters of Genesis. Neither does this study speak to the creation of life. The question is not a diachronic study of Genesis. The question is not simply a summary and comparison of Bible creation theories.

This investigation into the question, “What does the Bible say that God did when He created the heavens and the earth?” combines the most exegetically Biblically supported claims of ten current creation theories. In the end, I will propose a combined eleventh theory that, *Deo volente*, may come closer within the hermeneutical spiral to what the Bible says that God did when He created the heavens and the earth.

PRE-UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE AS SOURCE OF CREATION DATA

If one is to study Biblical theology on creation, it is logical that the Bible should be the primary source of data. But how do we approach the early Biblical literature on creation?

REAL COMMUNICATION ABOUT THE REAL CREATION

We have four lines of evidence that the Bible is real communication about real places and events. First, we have correspondence between Bible locations and events and a wealth of archeological discoveries.² Although these discoveries cannot confirm all the details in the Bible text, these archeological sites agree consistently with the Bible text.

² I have personally studied on location most of the major archeological sites in Israel that are also mentioned in the Bible. I have personally dug in the Tiberius site. These sites cannot confirm the events, but certainly the ancient cities and in some cases even specific buildings mentioned are there for anyone to visit. There is a wealth of information in Amihai Mazar, *Archeology of the Land of the Bible; 10,000-586B.C.E.; Anchor Bible Reference Library* (New York: Doubleday, 1990); Ariel Lewin, *The Archeology of Ancient Judea and Palestine* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2005); Anson F. Rainey and R. Stephen Notley, *The Sacred Bridge* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006) and F. Bourbon and E. Lavagno, *The Holy Land, Guide to the Archeological and Historical Monuments* (Vercelli, Italy: White Star and Barnes and Noble, 2001).

Second, we have correspondence between Bible accounts such as the flood and a plethora of mythic accounts of the flood from the Ancient Near East as well as from around the world. Concerning the flood, we have not only Utnapishtim in the Gilgamesh epic, Ziusudra in the Eridu Genesis, and Xuthistros in the Berossus story, but also oral flood traditions from around the world in unrelated languages.³ Moreover, there are current investigations of a great flood.⁴ The understanding of this writer is that these traditions, investigations, and above all the Biblical account give evidence of a common source—real events that actually happened recounted by eyewitnesses from whom the oral and later written narratives arose. Going back before the flood, we have data in the Bible about the creation recorded in Genesis. Jewish tradition says that the creation (1:1–2:4a) and Adam (2:4b–5:1a) narratives were first passed down as oral narrative and later as written creation narratives.⁵ Isaiah explained, “Has it not been declared to you from the beginning?” (Isa. 40:21). It is reasonably to conclude that *real events* passed down from a *common source*, apparently at first orally, underlie the five major and over one hundred minor Bible texts on creation, and to a lesser degree similar elements in creation myths from the ANE and around the world.

Third, we have correspondence between the Bible and science. For example, the Bible gives us two basic teachings of about the origin of the universe—that the universe had a beginning and that it has been stretching out ever since it was created. Eleven or twelve Bible texts declare that God has been stretching out the heavens. Isaiah 42:5 says, “Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out” (NASB). Only within the last century has modern science realized that the universe had a beginning and is stretching our or expanding. While we take great precaution not to read all the modern scientific data of the beginning and expansion of the universe back into the ancient Bible text, nevertheless we

³ Robert M. Best, *Noah's Ark and the Ziusudra Epic: Sumerian Origins of the Flood Myth* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, Inc., 1999); J. F. Bierlein, *Parallel Myths* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994); Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942); Barbara C. Sproul, *Primal Myths: Creation Myths Around the World* (New York: HarperCollins, 1979); David Adams Leeming and Margaret Adams Leeming, *A Dictionary of Creation Myths* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Marie-Louise Von Franz, *Creation Myths* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2001).

⁴ Robert D. Ballard, *Adventures in Ocean Exploration: From the Discovery of the Titanic to the Search for Noah's Flood* (Hanover, PA: National Geographic Society, 2001); William Ryan and Walter Pitman, *Noah's Flood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998). Ryan, Pitman, and Ballard have not proven a Biblical flood but they have introduced a specific flood theory. I am not affirming Ryan and Pitman's particular theory.

⁵ Jubilees suggests Enoch and Noah wrote material.

may intelligently recognize the correspondence between the ancient text and these modern discoveries. It is beyond the purview of this study to investigate or defend these correspondences. However, the correspondences are there for all to see.

Fourth, we have internal consistency within the Bible once the texts are properly understood. Again, it is beyond the purview of this study to go into any example other than the creation. Although not my main point in this study, the over one hundred minor and five major Bible texts on creation, once they are properly exegeted from the Hebrew or Greek texts, do all agree and fit together seamlessly. The Bible does contain real information about what God did when He created the heavens and the earth, some of which is also discoverable by science.

On the other hand, I also agree with Bruce Waltke that the Bible account of creation events “contains information unknowable to any man”⁶ by firsthand experience. Humans were present during the flood, so flood traditions could have been passed down. And there are many flood traditions in mythology, not least the Gilgamesh Epic, and in tribal traditions around the world to this day. But humans were not present during the creation. Yet the creation was real. The universe had a beginning, just as the Bible says, and it is there for all to see and to learn about. Some of the claims in the Bible about the creation are knowable to us only because they have been revealed in the Bible.

Can we look to the Bible account of the creation for data about the actual creation events? Here we encounter a major problem. Scholars and lay advocates of the Biblical creation disagree on what the Bible says about those events. That is a major reason for the thesis of this dissertation evaluating ten major theories of creation. If we can achieve a more accurate consensus of what the Bible says about the creation events based on the Bible text itself, and if that consensus accurately predicts what science subsequently discovers, then we may have evidence that the Bible’s details about the creation are based on the real events of the creation.

In contrast to the Bible, creation myths from around the world contain not only some elements that match the Bible accounts but also many mythic elements that are clearly contrary to both the Bible and to the most strongly attested findings of modern science. ANE

⁶ Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3, Part IV: The Theology of Genesis 1,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:528 (Oct.–Dec. 1975), 331.

Semitic languages scholar Bruce Waltke claims, “The biblical account radically differs from the creation myths of the ancient Near East in its theological stance.”⁷ After reading a number of ANE creation and flood accounts, the writer of this study agrees. Therefore, the writer of this study will confine himself to the Bible text.

There are many views of Pentateuch authorship that are beyond the purview of this study. Without defense or analysis of the authorship (this study will be long enough just trying to encompass ten creation theories), I will speak of “Moses” as the human author throughout this study and God as behind Moses.

I take the “canonical” approach, that the final form of the text that we have is the text we are to investigate, regardless of one’s personal theory of the origin of the text. I do not expect all my readers to agree, but a canonical approach is, I believe, a legitimate alternative.

Written text is communication, and as such is ultimately intended to be understood.⁸ This is certainly the case with the Bible text. “A skilful reader will experience what a skilful communicator intended to accomplish through the agency of a text as an interface takes place between the worlds of the author, text, and reader.”⁹ The text of Genesis demonstrates that the author was a highly skilful writer, and certainly God behind the author is the consummate communicator. Human language is not an insuperable barrier to understanding what the Bible says that God did when He created the heavens and the earth. Further, Genesis 1 and 2 was written in the form of a chronologically sequential narrative, including “in the beginning,” “day one,” etc., a form of literature designed to communicate sequential real events. “Scripture employs narrative genre deliberately, but it does so in such a way that the historical basis (event) for the narrational depiction (text) is absolutely essential. The revelation value of the Bible depends on its history value.”¹⁰ However, not all texts in the Bible about creation are in the form of narrative genre. Although not in narrational genre, texts from Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and the prophets in their genres depict the same sequence of events with some added details. Since these non-narrational genre texts list the same sequence of events, we may deduce that these texts in Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and the prophets also

⁷ Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3” Part IV, 332.

⁸ J. Barentsen, “The Validity of Human Language: A Vehicle for Divine Truth,” *Grace Theological Journal*, 9:30–31, Spring 1988.

⁹ E. R. Clendenen, “Postholes, Postmodernism, and the Prophets: Toward a Textlinguistic Paradigm,” in David S. Dockery, ed., *The Challenge of Postmodernism* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1995), 144.

¹⁰ Vern S. Poythress, “Adequacy of Language and Accommodation,” in E. D. Radmacher and R. D. Preus, eds. *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 352.

convey real communication about the creation that can be added to the Genesis narrative, if the constraint of the genre of each different text is observed. As additional support for combining the data from the different Bible texts on creation is that, after much exegetical analysis, I have not found within all the Bible texts together any irresolvable internal contradictions. So the data from all the Bible creation texts may be carefully combined, the compiler being very cognizant of genre differences, to give us a very full understanding of the events of the creation. The way this combination will be done in this study is to consider what other exegetes have said in their creation theories, evaluate those claims by the Bible creation texts, and then gather their most Biblically supported claims into a combined eleventh theory.

Therefore, this study will investigate only *Bible* creation texts, in their present canonical form, and do so with the evidentially supported conviction that such an investigation goes back to the real Creator's real communication of real events.

In investigating the ten theories and evaluating their claims by the Bible texts, this writer seeks to answer the question, "What does the Bible say that God did when He created the heavens and the earth?"

NOT NECESSARILY EASILY INTERPRETED

However, it is also the pre-understanding of this writer that we are studying ancient literature with motifs that are unfamiliar to moderns; with varying genres; in a language with grammar, vocabulary, and expressions that are not native to us; all within their *weltanschauung* and ancient culture. The text was not written in modern scientific language or within modern technical historical conventions. There really are two horizons—the writer's and the interpreter's—and fusing those two horizons involves serious work and still will be imperfect.¹¹ Moreover, the doctrine of the perspicuity of Scripture does not mean that all texts are equally easily understood. On top of all this, we who investigate the text are hampered by the noetic effects of the fall.

So on the one hand, this author understands that the Bible contains real communication about real events of the creation ultimately from our Creator. Yet on the other hand, we have a Bible in which are some things that are hard to understand (2 Peter

¹¹ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980).

3:16), among them the creation, a subject that has challenged us for generations. That is why the task of considering creation theories, interpreting the creation texts, and integrating the results is still a work in progress.

However, the above consideration of verbal communication in the Bible text is only one side of God's communication about the creation.

COMPLEMENTARY REAL NATURAL REVELATION

This writer also believes that logically derivative from the above understanding of the real Creator is the non-verbal *theologia gloriae* in the cosmos. The theology of creation in the Bible texts accurately interpreted and our growing knowledge of the cosmos accurately understood are complementary, not contradictory, because the Author of both is אֱלֹהִים (ehād). Investigations into both may be pursued independently, thus avoiding reductionism in either direction—solely *deus ex machine* on the one hand, and on the other hand the misuse of Occam's razor to eliminate theological investigation into the creation.¹²

PRE-UNDERSTANDINGS WITHIN THE HERMENEUTICAL SPIRAL

This writer recognizes that his readers may or may not agree with his pre-understanding of real communication in the Bible about real creation events, yet real interpretive challenges, and complementary real natural revelation in the universe, both ultimately from one and the same Creator. However, *differences in opinions on all the above also may be seen as part of the corporate hermeneutical spiral*. Resulting interaction from different viewpoints about Scripture texts on creation may lead to a more accurate understanding of the answer to our question, “What does the Bible say that God did when He created the heavens and the earth?”

¹² To eliminate theological investigation into the creation would be to eliminate an essential source of data because אֱלֹהִים was the only one there, so He alone can report first hand what He did.

ENTERING THE CORPORATE HERMENEUTICAL SPIRAL

Several times, I have referred to the corporate hermeneutical spiral.¹³ In seeking an understanding of the Bible text, we enter a corporate venture of the church, involving interaction between investigators of the Bible texts on creation. This corporate investigation should be conducted by objective hermeneutical rules related to the grammar, vocabulary, genre, literary context, and milieu of the origin of the ancient Biblical literature. This investigation is also conducted within the corporate critique of Biblical and interdisciplinary scholars, involving feedback and progress toward the goal of understanding the Biblical text. The spiral metaphor pictures interactive feedback as we are spiraling in toward the center, where accurate interpretation of the Bible lies. Although the term was not used in earlier church history, it was within the corporate hermeneutical spiral that the church came to understand the great doctrine of the Trinity and by much back and forth interaction finally arrived at the doctrine of the hypostatic union. It is to be hoped that such may occur in understanding creation.

A test of whether the conclusions from our hermeneutical spiral accurately reflect the meaning of the Bible text is that those conclusions should be reproducible by others from the same Bible texts. Reproducibility has been a test of accuracy across disciplines, whether the physical sciences or Bible exegesis.

As I have studied the ten major creation theories and the over one hundred Bible creation texts, I have attempted to remain within the corporate hermeneutical spiral. I have done this by submitting my studies to the academic community by presenting parts of the theory in papers for critique and review. This thesis is another part of the process of submitting to the academic community for refereeing.

THE APPROACH BEING TAKEN

Genres of the main creation texts will be identified. Hermeneutics will be stated. The ten theories will be summarized. Then the claims from the literature of each theory will be identified. Those claims will be evaluated by Bible creation texts to determine whether or not

¹³ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*.

the claims are supported by the Bible texts. The five major Bible creation texts are Genesis 1-2; Job 26; Job 38; Psalm 104; and Proverbs 8. An eleventh combined theory will be outlined briefly and minor creation theories summarized. Then, using the four pairs of diagnostic questions, all eleven theories will be evaluated by Bible texts related to each specific diagnostic question. Theories with problematic claims contra to the creation texts will be set aside. Finally, the most strongly supported claims of all ten theories will be gathered and integrated with data from the Bible texts into a fully described eleventh combined theory. The goal is to answer the ultimate question, “What does the Bible say that God did when He created the heavens and the earth?”

PART TWO—GENRES AND HERMENEUTICS

We humans tend to interpret subjectively within *our* worldview by *our* presuppositions. But the Bible was written in ancient thought-forms in various genres that may be different from our modern forms. Hermeneutics are practices that limit our subjectivity and urge us to interpret by the ancient genre, in their context, and with their grammar and vocabulary. Because of the importance of hermeneutics and ancient Bible genres, I will summarize the genres of Genesis and twelve hermeneutical practices before investigating the creation theories.

CHAPTER 2

TAKING THE GENRE OF EACH CREATION TEXT SERIOUSLY

The genre of each creation text must be taken seriously. In the chapter on hermeneutics, I will state the general concept of considering genre as a key practice in interpretation. In this chapter, I will discuss the specific genres of the main creation texts. In the many books I have studied advocating various creation theories, the genres of the creation texts are rarely considered. But Job 38 and Genesis 1:1–2:4a are not identical genre-less sources of creation data. Their genre differences must be considered.

The creation texts were written in ancient genres. Even if the information in a text on creation corresponds, for example, to a modern scientific theory of origins, the ancient text is neither the modern theory nor in modern scientific literature genre. Both its genre and information are ancient.

Because this study is primarily about the ten creation theories rather than primarily about the creation texts, I will limit this chapter. I will discuss the genres of the five major creation texts and briefly mention the main genre the majority of the over one hundred minor creation texts.

THE GENRE OF GENESIS 1:1–2:4a

Genesis should be read, not simply as data on the creation, the flood, and the patriarchs. Each type of literature should be read according to its “ancient literary art,” its genre.¹⁵ The genre of Genesis 1:1–2:4a is foundational to the entire view of creation. The uniqueness of this pericope presents challenges to us as we attempt to identify the genre.

TWELVE GENRES IN GENESIS

George Coats proposed a dozen distinct types of narrative genres found in Genesis and the Pentateuch. Only some of these are relevant to the creation passages, but it may be helpful to review them all to get a perspective of those that do relate to the creation passage.

¹⁵ George W. Coats, *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1983), 3.

Coat's comprehensive list of genres for the Pentateuch include primeval saga, family saga, heroic saga, tale, novella, legend, history, report, annals, fable, etiology, and myth. All these various genres are within the overarching genre of narrative. Although Coats and I have rather different views of the Bible, some of his categories are quite helpful. The following is a summary of Coats' genres:

A. Longer genres are the sagas, history, and biography.

1. Saga, as Coats describes it, is "a long, prose, traditional narrative" that is formed of episodes in "a real world defined by real people struggling with real limitations." A saga may include within it short "tales, reports, legends, anecdotes, hymns" and other smaller units. He identifies three types of sagas.

1.a. The primeval saga is an extended narrative of an ideal origin, then destruction or fall, and finally some degree of renewal. Coats designates the "Yahwist's version in Genesis 1—11" as a primeval saga.¹⁶

1.b. The family saga is an extended narrative of a family with emphasis on the patriarchal head. The purpose was to establish a legitimate historical, genealogical, and geographical foundation for the descendent people group. Coats sees the Abraham narrative of Genesis 12—25 as a family saga.

1.c. The heroic saga is about a single individual from birth through death with emphasis on his virtues and deeds.¹⁷ This heroic saga would have provided an example, both negative and positive, for the moral excellence of the descendent people group. Coats designates the "Yahwist's story of Moses, Exodus 1 – Deuteronomy 34" a heroic saga. All three examples of a saga—primeval, family, and heroic—are extended narratives.

2. "History as a genre of literature represents that kind of writing designed to record the events of the past as they actually occurred." It has "chronological stages or cause-effect sequences of events." "It is designed simply to record."¹⁸ A history is seen as a national record whereas a myth is designated by Coats as a family record. An example of a history is 1 and 2 Chronicles. Coats emphasizes that, by his definition, a history is determined "as the author(s) understood" the events, not determined by the actual accuracy of his record. So

¹⁶ Coats, *Genesis*, 6.

¹⁷ Coats, *Genesis*, 5-7.

¹⁸ Coats, *Genesis*, 9.

Coats would not vouch for the accuracy of the Chronicles simply because he designates the Chronicles as history genre.¹⁹

3. Biography is the history of a single individual.²⁰ It follows the chronological sequence of events in that individual's life, either from birth or beginning of adult activity until death. A biography is an unadorned history of the individual with less emphasis on virtues or vices as good or bad examples compared to the heroic saga.

B. Shorter genres are tale, novella, legend, anecdote, report, a series of brief reports in the form of annals, fable, etiology, and myth.

4. Tale is a short story narrative with a minimum of characters in a single episode or scene and a simple plot with circumstances that develops with tension into a resolution. It may be independent or part of a longer saga. It too is within this world and it may have an edification purpose. It is identified by "Olrik's laws"²¹ as having been originally passed down by oral tradition narrative.²² Coats identifies Abraham's sojourn in Egypt in Genesis 12 as an example of a tale. He sees this tale as an element within the larger family saga of Abraham.

5. Novella, according to Coats, is also a short narrative of a single episode set in this world. In contrast to a tale which was originally oral tradition, a novella was in literary written form from its original author. It has a unity imparted by that single author, often with a theological purpose intentionally built into the plot.²³

6. Legend, according to Coats, has no plot of tension developing into resolution but "employs a relatively static narration." "The structure of the legend features recurring emphasis on some particular characteristic of the narrative's hero."²⁴ Coats claims that Abraham's obedience to God's command to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22 is a legend. The characteristic that was emphasized was Abraham's faith.

7. Anecdote is a biographical sketch of a brief segment of the life of a person.²⁵ An anecdote would be much more limited in time than the whole biography of the person. In my

¹⁹ Coats, *Genesis*, 9.

²⁰ Coats, *Genesis*, 9.

²¹ Olrik, Axel. *Principles for Oral Narrative Research* (1921). Trans. Kirsten Wolf and Jody Jensen. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992). Olrik discusses six laws of epic folk oral narrative.

²² Coats, *Genesis*, 7-8.

²³ Coats, *Genesis*, 8.

²⁴ Coats, *Genesis*, 8.

²⁵ Coats, *Genesis*, 10.

opinion, Abraham's obedience with Isaac in Genesis 22 fits much better into this genre category as a short episode of Abraham's biography, rather than the designation "legend."

8. Report is a brief history "with a single event the subject of its record."²⁶ Coats repeats that he does not vouch for the accuracy of the reporting.

To clarify these: A short *anecdote* is a brief segment or episode about a single event of the whole *biography* of an individual. A short *report* is a brief segment or episode about a single event of the whole *history* of a nation.

9. Annals would be a series of brief reports. This series of reports would be limited to a single subject.²⁷

To clarify these: In the broader historical genre, history records the wide array of different events in the history of a nation. Report is about a single event. Annals are about a series of events on the same subject, a series of brief reports.

10. Fable "depicts a world of fantasy (see Williams), with the principal figures drawn typically, but not necessarily, from human and subhuman creatures...either animal or plant." The fable genre does not develop an extended plot but is a brief fantasy moral story, such as "a presumptuous character" with "an overblown ego pricked by a pointed moral."²⁸ Coats considers Numbers 22:22–35 about Balaam's ass as a fable.

11. Etiology is a narrative designed to explain a situation or a name that exists afterwards in the time of the teller. Coats identifies Exodus 15:23 about Israel coming to the bitter waters of Marah as an etiology.²⁹ Because of their bitterness the waters continued to be called Marah. Jewish exegetes identify the Eden account as an etiology of the human race and ultimately of Israel. Christians may identify Eden and the fall as an etiology for our present dilemma that includes sin.

12. Myth is a narrative genre "set in a fantasy world, designed to account for the real world by reference to the activities of the gods in the divine world."³⁰ Coats says Genesis 6:1–4 of the sons of God/the gods having children by the daughters of men/Adam is an example of a myth.³¹ Westermann quotes R. Pettazzoni that a myth is a "justification" of that

²⁶ Coats, *Genesis*, 10.

²⁷ Coats, *Genesis*, 10.

²⁸ Coats, *Genesis*, 10.

²⁹ Coats, *Genesis*, 10.

³⁰ Coats, *Genesis*, 10.

³¹ Coats, *Genesis*, 10.

which “is most essential to human life and to society” from “a primordial act of foundation recorded in the myth,”³² In other words, they see myths as “fantasy” stories, often of “activities of the gods,” as a “a primordial act of foundation” of the world and life in it

DIFFICULTIES DETERMINING THE GENRE OF GENESIS 1:1–2:4a

Determining the genre of the specific pericope of Genesis 1:1–2:4a raises questions and difficulties. The first difficulty is that there is a divide between two sides. Interpreters who take narrative more literally see Genesis as historical, but unfortunately tend to ignore the genre of each of the ancient texts about creation in the Bible, minimizing their differences. On the other side are form-critics who may see Genesis as the product of late sources and even later Israelite redactors. Form critics emphasize genre above the historical information about the creation and patriarchs. I suggest that the text should be read according to its ancient literary genre, yet read as relating real events in real places about real people.

Another difficulty is that terms such as “myth,” “legend,” and “fable” have multiple connotations. Coats himself recognizes this problem under “Myth” where he states that the term myth “has wide currency beyond the strict form-critical application.” In form-critical terminology a “myth” is a “fantasy” “designed to account for the real world by reference to the activities of the gods in the divine world.”³³ A legend has been defined by form critics as a “static narration” on some virtue. Coats adds that the designation “myth” or “legend” does not indicate whether the narrative relates actual events or fictitious narrative. But this caveat seems to run counter to his designation of a myth as “fantasy.” Coats says a fable “depicts a world of fantasy.”³⁴ As Coats recognizes, the term myth has currency in less technical circles as a traditional fictitious narrative usually from a local folk religion, often about foundational events. The first and primary definition in the past of myth according to the Oxford Universal Dictionary, Third Edition, is “A purely fictitious narrative.”³⁵ The definition “origin story” was not even listed. A legend was defined as an “unauthentic story handed down by tradition.”³⁶ The definition of fable is “A narrative or statement not founded on fact; a myth

³² Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 20, quoting R. Pettazzoni, “Myths of Beginning and Creation Myths,” *Essays on the History of Religion* (Keuden), 24-26.

³³ Coats, *Genesis*, 10.

³⁴ Coats, *Genesis*, 10.

³⁵ William Little, *The Oxford Universal Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 1306.

³⁶ Little, *Oxford Dictionary*, 1126.

or legend (now *rare*); a foolish story; a fabrication, falsehood.”³⁷ These are also the popular understandings of myth, legend, and fable. Now parts of Genesis are termed “myth,” “legend,” or “fable” by form-critical scholars. But these pronouncements may be taken by most non-technical readers to mean that Genesis has little or no basis in actual events. Coats designates the Balaam’s ass events as fable. He defines a fable as “fantasy.” A literary fantasy is normally understood to be purely fictitious. Does Coats mean he can prove that there was no historical basis for Numbers 22:22–35? Because of the double connotation of legend, myth, and fable, the use of these particular form-critical terms seems to add unneeded confusion. So I prefer not to use the terms “myth,” “legend,” or “fable” for the genres of Genesis even though I agree that Genesis 1:1–2:4a is about the origin of the world and the life on it.³⁸ Otherwise, many of these genre categories may be quite helpful in distinguishing different types of literature in Genesis.

NARRATIVE—THE BROAD GENRE OF GENESIS

The broad genre of Genesis is widely recognized as narrative with theological overtones interspersed with genealogies and occasional poetic seams. John Sailhamer argues for the narrative nature of the Pentateuch as a whole. He defines “historical narrative as a proselike literature which seeks to render a *realistic* picture of the world.”³⁹ In historical narrative an author with a viewpoint or perspective records events in sequence that happened “in time and space.”⁴⁰ The author may frame the events of the narrative in a literary structure that may include an introductory event, description of the situation, a body of sequential events possibly in a repetitive format, dialogue, and a conclusion.⁴¹ Genesis 1:1—2:4a has all these elements: It has an introductory event (1:1), a description of the situation (1:2), a body of sequential events (1:3–27), dialogue (1:28–30), and a conclusion (1:31—2:4a).⁴² So we may conclude that Genesis 1:1—2:4a it is a unit of historical narrative. The body contains sequential events in a repetitive format separated by the time frame reiteration of the evening and morning phrase with sequential numbering. Coats says that Genesis is broadly narrative

³⁷ Little, *Oxford Dictionary*, 665.

³⁸ John N. Oswalt, “A Myth Is a Myth Is a Myth: Toward a Working Definition,” *A Spectrum of Thought: Essays in Honor of Dennis F. Kinlaw*, ed. M. L. Peterson (Wilmore, KY: Francis Asbury), 1982, 135-145.

³⁹ John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 13.

⁴⁰ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 15.

⁴¹ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 25.

⁴² Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 25.

genre. Westermann also agrees that Genesis 1:1–2:4a fits into the broad genre of narrative and specifically historical report.⁴³ I agree with this designation of a broad genre of narrative, supported by genealogies with poetic seams all with theological overtones and historical intent.

GENERATIONAL ANNALS—THE SPECIFIC GENRE OF GENESIS 1:1–2:4a

What is the specific genre of Genesis 1:1–2:4a? Coats argues that Genesis 1:1–2:4a is the specific genre “report,”⁴⁴ within a primeval saga,⁴⁵ all within the broader narrative genre. Coats wishes to designate Genesis 1-11 as primeval saga, but I would suggest that Genesis 1:1-2:4a is unique and should be separated from Genesis 2:4b-11:26. The *tôlê dôt* of Genesis 2:4a and very different genre beginning with Genesis 2:4b would seem to support this claim.

Westermann agrees with the specific genre “report,” within the broader narrative genre, although he adds that there is a unique fusion of the poetic and prose.⁴⁶ “Report” seems to be a good designation, but I would like to be a little more precise.

I suggest that the genre of Genesis 1:1–2:4a is a series of succinct reports, what Coats calls “annals.” These succinct annals were within the broader genre of narrative.

Succinct Annals

Coats designates Genesis 1:1–2:4a as “report” genre. He defines “report” as a brief history “with a single event the subject of its record.”⁴⁷

However, Genesis 1:1–2:4a is composed of a sequence of clearly defined separate events apparently in chronological order—the initial creation in 1:1 concluded by the explanation of the unfinished condition of the earth, the darkness of the sea surface, and the location of the Spirit in 1:2. Next are eight command units or strophes involving six designated workdays. Finally, the pericope concludes with the day of rest. So Genesis 1:1–2:4a has a total of eight or ten strophic reports, depending on whether one separates the reports by days or by command units. Coats defines annals as “a series of reports” limited to

⁴³ Westermann, *Genesis*, 80, 90.

⁴⁴ Coats, *Genesis*, 47.

⁴⁵ Coats, *Genesis*, 6.

⁴⁶ Westermann, *Genesis*, 90.

⁴⁷ Coats, *Genesis*, 10.

a single subject.⁴⁸ Genesis 1:1–2:4a is a series of eight or ten reports, the first “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” and the last ending with “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.” All eight or ten reports were sequential reports on the single subject of the creation events. So the genre of Genesis 1:1–2:4a would seem more precisely designated as a series of succinct reports on the same subject, that is, “annals.” The only serious objection to the annals genre that I see is that the reports are quite brief. But brevity seems to be the essence of Genesis 1:1–2:4a. Overriding the brevity objection is a single broad subject, creation; composed of a series of succinct reports in temporal order with striking stylistic similarities yet distinct sequential differences. I conclude that the basic genre of Genesis 1:1–2:4a is succinct narrative annals.

Etiological

Genesis 1:1–2:4a may not be strictly an etiology. However, the ending sentence suggests an etiological nuance, “This is the *tôlê dôt* of the heavens and the earth when they were created.” Each תולדות (*tôlê dôt*, generational annals) states the patriarchal ancestor, thus looking back to the previous narrative. Since the concept of *tôlê dôt* is generational reports, it also connects forward to those descendents of the patriarch. Wiseman claims that the *tôlê dôt* was the colophon at the end of that speaker or author’s personal historical narrative or genealogy. The importance the ancients placed on family history narratives and genealogies indicates their commitment to continuity. That is why each *tôlê dôt* was a connection in the ancient narrative genre, not a modern division. So the *tôlê dôt* reflects back to the heavens and earth as the patriarchal ancestor and ultimately to God as the ultimate “Ancestor.” It connects forward recognizing God as the source of the ground, the water to irrigate it, the man to work it, and the descendents of the man and woman, who were to “multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over” it. Thus the adjective “etiological” may nuance the genre of narrative annals because Genesis 1:1–2:4a explains the cause or source of the heavens and the earth (the entire universe); the cause of day and night; the cause of open atmosphere; the cause of sea and land; the cause of plant life, the cause of days, seasons, and years demarcated by the sun, moon and stars; the cause of plant and animal life on earth; the cause of male and female humans, and the cause of marriage that

⁴⁸ Coats, *Genesis*, 10.

will result in offspring who will rule the earth. The author of Genesis 1:1–2:4a had the ultimate etiological purpose—the explanation that the eternal God was the ultimate cause of everything else and that the heavens and earth were the mediate causes. There does seem to be “etiological” purpose to the narrative annals genre, so the adjective “etiological” may nuance the narrative annals genre.

Generational

Previously I stated my concern about semantic and conceptual anachronisms. Genesis 1:1–2:4a is not a modern scientific exposition of our origins in modern scientific language. The current widespread debate in creation circles focuses on six long day-age geological eras versus literal day-night-cycle days. However, a geological era is a modern concept. And “literal day” is not a sufficiently specific term. If “literal day” means a daylight-evening-nighttime-morning solar cycle day on planet earth, or in some cases the daylight part of the solar cycle on planet earth, this analysis of *yôm* in Genesis 1:1–31 seems supported grammatically. However, this too misses the nuancing of the genre. The whole debate ignores genre.

Genesis 1:1–2:4a seems to have a generational nuancing in its literary design or genre. “Genesis is a book whose plot is genealogy.”⁴⁹ Genesis 1:1–2:4a ends with “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.” These generations of the heavens and the earth link back to the creation events of the heavens and the earth, as well as linking forward through Adam to his descendents.

Each *tôl^edôt* in Genesis listed the patriarch-author—heavens and earth in 2:4a; Adam in 5:1; Noah in 6:9; Shem, Ham and Japheth in 10:1, Shem in 11:10, Terah in 11:27, Isaac in 25:19, etc. The narrative before the *tôl^edôt* may be seen as an eyewitness account about the origin of the patriarchal head—his ancestors and his main life events and sometimes his immediate descendents. Then the *tôl^edôt* generational formula is stated listing the patriarch-author. Finally, following the *tôl^edôt* generational formula is narrative about the patriarchal head’s descendents. For example, after the *tôl^edôt* of the heavens and the earth is the *tôl^edôt* of Adam from Genesis 2:4b through Genesis 5:1. Genesis 2—3 narrates Adam’s origin. Genesis 4 narrates events in the lives of his descendents. Then Adam is listed as the

⁴⁹ Naomi Steinberg, “The Genealogical Framework of the Family Stories in Genesis,” *Semeia* 46 (1989), 41-50.

patriarch-author in his *tôlêdôt* generational formula in Genesis 5:1. Then his descendents are listed in generational “begats” in Genesis 5:3–32 at the beginning of the narrative by Noah. Noah’s generational account ends with his *tôlêdôt* in Genesis 6:1.

So we may suggest that “the heavens and the earth” created by God may be understood in a literary sense as the patriarchal head of 1:1–2:4a. The origin of the heavens and the earth is stated in Genesis 1:1. The situation is explained in 1:2. Then the six workdays may be seen as six begetting days. Just as a son was born on a specific day, so the six begetting days of 1:3–31 were daylight-evening-nighttime-morning solar cycle days on planet earth in which the first life of the new “generation” began. Westermann agrees that the initial creation and six days could be “each understood as a succession of begettings.”⁵⁰ Let me be very clear that the actual creation was absolutely by the fiat command of eternal God who is spirit. So there cannot have been any sexual action or birthing in the events whatsoever! Let me also be very clear that the begetting day was not a geological era, but a daylight-evening-nighttime-morning solar cycle day as is normally the case with birthdays. Each begetting day was a normal kind of day, beginning with day one which consisted of the first daylight on planet earth, then evening, nighttime, and morning. The generational aspect is not an external isogesis idea or my idea but is in the Bible itself at the end of this pericope in Genesis 2:4a, “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth,” *as a literary device from the author*. In literary form Genesis 1:1–2:4a “recalls the genealogies and their recurring phrases.”⁵¹ Counting the initial creation of the heavens and the earth and then the seven begetting days, the generations of the heavens and the earth may be seen as a total of eight generations, or if command units are considered along with the initial creation before the eight command units and day of rest at the end, then ten generations. Thus, we may see a generational nuance of the ancient genre of Genesis 1:1–2:4a.

So the initial creation and then the seven days, although uniquely the generations of the heavens and the earth (rather than of people), may be understood as eight or ten generations of God’s creation work. Genesis 1:1–2:4a is not a formal genealogy in the same way as Genesis 5 or 10. However, we may add “generational” as an adjective nuancing the genre. The genre of Genesis 1:1–2:4a may be seen as generational narrative annals.

⁵⁰ Westermann, *Genesis Commentary*, 16. Westermann refers us to S. Lanersdorfer, *Die sumerischen Parallelen zur biblischen Urgeschichte: Alttest, Abhandlungen VII 5* (Münster, 1917) as an earlier advocate of this idea.

⁵¹ Westermann, *Genesis*, 81.

Fusion of Poetry and Prose in a *Geschehensbogen*

Westermann characterized Genesis 1:1–2:4a as a *Geschehensbogen*, an arc or arch of happenings.⁵² One base of this arch is Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The other base of the arch is Genesis 2:4a, “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.” In a chiasmic format, on one side rise the three forming days and on the other side the three parallel filling days. The chiasm begins with the creation of the heavens and the earth in 1:1 and ends with the *tôl^edôt* of the heavens and the earth in 2:4a.

This arc of Genesis 1 “contains a fusion of poetry and prose that is unique in the Old Testament,”⁵³ although its primary character is narrative prose. The initial creation, the eight command units, and the seventh day may be seen as ten poetic strophes, poetic because of the repetitious character. The “individual sentences of the account of creation by the word [poetic] have a definite rhythmic stamp,” but the rhythm remains “irregular.”⁵⁴ Thus the creation account is a unique fusion of a repetitive poetic element in a primarily prose narrative arc or arch of a series of events reported as annals.

Historical and Chronological

Genesis 1:1–2:4a is not strictly a national history genre as is Chronicles. Coats identifies history genre as “writing designed to record the events of the past as they actually occurred,” that involves “chronological stages,” and is a broad “national” record. Genesis 1:1–2:4a does not conform to the third, a “national” record. But Genesis 1:1–2:4a does conform to the first two criteria, so the genre may be seen as having an historical character.

In the first criterion, the key word is “designed.” Coats makes it clear that the validity of the genre is *not* that it conforms to modern historiographical standards but that the author’s design was an historical record of what he understood as having actually happened. On the one hand I do believe that what is recorded actually happened, but on the other hand I am not claiming that the record of Genesis 1:1–2:4a should be measured by modern historiographical or present-day origins cosmology journal standards. The genre is ancient, not modern. Yet the text contains indicators of “writing designed to record the events of the

⁵² Westermann, *Genesis*, 80; Oxford-Duden German Dictionary, 329, 167.

⁵³ Westermann, *Genesis*, 90.

⁵⁴ Westermann, *Genesis*, 91.

past as they actually occurred.” This pericope also has indicators of chronological sequence by sequentially numbered days. So I suggest the adjectives “historical” and “chronological” nuance the genre “annals.”

In summary we may say that the author designed Genesis 1:1–2:4a as a series of succinct chronological historical annals with the ultimate etiological purpose in a generational format.

Theological

Genesis is not just plain history, but was theologically crafted. The theology is dependent on the historicity. The history was chosen because it is theologically foundational. “The Torah’s theology is thus inseparable from its history and literary qualities.”⁵⁵ The events recorded include signs such as the rainbow and the plagues. The idea of signs indicates theological purpose behind the events. They reveal God and tell of His glory, holiness, loving-kindness, justice, and some of His purposes. These attributes are not stated abstractly, but are revealed in the sequential events involving real people in real time at real places in the historical narrative of Genesis.

So the author of Genesis, apparently relying on oral and/or written *tôlê dôt* family traditions, crafted an extraordinary theologically nuanced historical narrative.

Summary of the Genre of Genesis 1:1–2:4a

In summary, the present author sees the overall genre as theologically nuanced, family tradition, historical narrative. The very specific genre of Genesis 1:1–2:4a is chronologically generational, historical, brief annals, theologically nuanced, with an etiological purpose explaining the origins of the heavens and the earth from the perspective location of the Holy Spirit of God. The narrative is a unique fusion of poetry and prose forming an arc of events.

⁵⁵ Richard Elliott Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001), 5.

THE GENRES OF JOB 26 AND 38

Job is the justification of God in a drama within the setting of both the heavens and the earth. The protagonist is God the Creator and the antagonist the “accuser of the brethren.” Job is the human champion of the protagonist and the three “comforters,” let by Eliphaz who was seduced by an evil spirit in Job 4, as representatives of the antagonist.⁵⁶ The problem of evil (POE) is the occasion, not the point of this amazing book.⁵⁷ Thus, the various genres in Job are very different from Genesis, even though both books may have their roots in roughly the same general time period. Job was responding from within the “problem of evil” in the most dreadful intimacy in a lament and debate. Chapters 1—2 are narrative of sequential events at a specific location as the setting. The conclusion returns to the narrative genre. Chapter 3 is Job’s I-wish-I-had-never-been-born lament genre. In chapters 4 through 31 the genre changes radically into the poetic accusation and response debate of the human representatives of the protagonist and antagonists before God himself speaks. The structure is four rounds of poetic debates in Job 4-31 without a resolution. In Job 32—37 younger Elihu makes four speeches that have glimmers of approaching the answer God will give, but even he fails.⁵⁸ Then God challenges Job with questions beyond human understanding resulting in Job responding in contrition before God. Since God never answers Job’s questions about the problem of evil directly, Job is not a true theodicy.

According to Coat’s list of genres, the genre of the beginning and ending narrative may be anecdote of segments of Job’s life, not a full length autobiography.

The dialogues contain an amazing variety of sub-genres: poetic laments, poetic curses, creation poems, a hymn in praise to wisdom (Job 28), and proverbs in syntactic parallelism. The response by God to Job seems to have been spoken to Job alone, suggesting that the source of the book was at least partially autobiographical. This variety of genres makes it difficult to classify Job among the groups of books of the Bible. Should the book of Job be included with the canonically previous historical books because of its narrative prologue and conclusion? Should Job be included with Psalms because of its death-wish poetic lament in chapter 3 and its succeeding poetic dialogue? Should the Job 28 hymn to wisdom, with its similarities to Proverbs 1—9, be seen as wisdom genre? The book of Job is

⁵⁶ Henry M. Morris, *Remarkable Record of Job* (Santee, CA.: Master Books, 1988), 66.

⁵⁷ David J. A. Clines, *Word Biblical Commentary: Job 1-20* (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), xxxviii.

⁵⁸ R. Raymond Lloyd, “Elihu, Job’s Fourth Friend,” *Biblical Illustrator*, VI. 32, No. 4, Summer 2006, 68-71.

far more complex than any single genre. With Edouard Dhorme, I conclude that Job includes multiple genres.⁵⁹

The creation passages in Job are not incidental. They are at the core of the justification of God. In Job 25 Bildad, as a representative of the Accuser, claimed that the creation is “not pure in His eyes” so man is a “maggot” and cannot be made righteous. At first Job responded with sarcasm. But then Job transitioned to the dead and then beyond the dead to a sequential poetic praise genre account of creation. Even out of his depths of lament, Job marveled at God’s work in the creation events. His justification of God, even in the midst of his lament, proclaims the transcendence of God the Creator. Job concludes, “Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?” (ESV) Chapter 26 of Job’s justification of God as Creator forms a praise genre that presages God’s own response in Job 38—41.

In Job 38—41 God responds to Job with questions Job cannot answer. God’s response harks back to themes already raised in Job, but God reverses those themes. For example, Job wished for non-birth in chapter 3, yet God birthed not only the sea and the rain but He oversees the birth of the high mountain goats and swift gazelles. The birth motif is as evident in the diastolic chapters 38—41 as the death-wish motif in systolic chapter 3. Job wanted the doors of his mothers womb shut, yet God opened the doors for the birth of the sea. Job bemoaned the silence of God, yet in chapters 38—41 God spoke overwhelmingly to Job.⁶⁰ God’s reply in chapters 38—41 is not lament but the final of the justification of God, not by giving answers to the problem of evil but by revealing a tiny glimpse of God the Creator.

Within this response by God is the sequence of questions about the creation, a sequence that has explanation about and correspondence to the order to the events in Genesis one. It is this explanation of and correspondence to the same series of events in Job 26 and 38 and in Genesis 1:1–2:3 that enables us to consider cross-genre comparison of Biblical texts on creation. In Job 38, the form is not just brief questions, but clauses revealing creation content, “Were you there when I laid the earth’s foundation?” God continues speaking about earth’s foundations, then questions if Job understands: Who birthed the sea and covered it

⁵⁹ Edouard Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, trans. H. Knight (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1967)

⁶⁰ Robert Alter, “Truth and Poetry in the Book of Job,” in *Modern Critical Interpretations: the Book of Job*, Harold Bloom, ed. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), 76-82.

with cloud as with swaddling clothes, then limited the sea by land? Who ordered the first dawn through the cloud layer, and the formation of land features by wrinkling the land as the wrinkles of a garment? The metaphors are powerful, yet they have specific content about creation that can be garnered by careful reading while being observant of the genre and literary devices.⁶¹ In fact, the very genre of poetry contributes to the understanding of the order, purpose, and greatness of God's work in creation in a way that could never be so fully conveyed in prose. Robert Alter catches this in his statement, "Through this pushing of poetic expression toward its own upper limits, the concluding speech helps us see the panorama of creation, as perhaps we could do only through poetry, with the eyes of God."⁶²

THE GENRE OF PSALM 104

Psalm 104 is a praise psalm.⁶³ A psalm, Laurance Wieder reminds us, was equally in the written Hebrew text and sung at the appropriate feast, and later by cantors in the synagogues and in Christian churches.⁶⁴ The terms *šîr* or *šîra* means song and *mitzmôr* means melody. These terms were commonly in the preface statement of a Psalm. Although these two terms did not preface this psalm, the first word is יְבַרְכֵנּוּ (*bār^akî*), indicating a song of praise to God. The masterful poetic elements of the creation motif of psalm 104 raise the poetry to great artistry.⁶⁵

Yet the sequential content from the first light to the Narrator's location, through the expansion of the heavens, the work of cloud and fire, the founding of earth, the formation of land limiting the sea, and finally the forming of animal life presents a creation sequence. Although Psalm 104 is praise poetry genre, yet this creation sequence may be integrated with Genesis 1 and Job 26 and 38 because of the match in sequence of the events.

THE GENRE OF PROVERBS 8

⁶¹ Alter, "Poetry," 64.

⁶² Alter, "Poetry," 65.

⁶³ For various sub-genres depending of *Sitz im Leben*, one may refer to Hermann Gunkel, *Einleitung in die Psalmen. Die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels* (Göttingen, 1933).

⁶⁴ Laurance Wieder, *The Poets' Book of Psalms* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), xiv.

⁶⁵ Clinton, *Interpreting the Scriptures, Hebrew Poetry* (Corel Gables, FL: Worldteam Learning Resource Center, 1977).

Proverbs are thought of as brief aphorisms of wisdom. However, the early chapters of Proverbs contain several prolonged discourses and poems on wisdom.

Proverbs 8 is one of these poems in the form of a discourse by Wisdom personified. The entire discourse is an exaltation of the personification of Wisdom⁶⁶ and within this poetic discourse is a pericope on God's wisdom in creation.

The creation pericope is 8:22–31. This pericope is a poetic chiasmic-like sequence of “before” events of 8:23–26 working forward through the events of creation, and then “when” events in 8:27–29 beginning over with the heavens. Wisdom was present with God “before” the 8:23–26 events and wisdom was there “when” God did the 8:27–29 events. The poetic wisdom pericope forms an exaltation of the personification of Wisdom. Included in both halves is a sequence of creation events. There is an unfortunate tendency by young earth creationists to collapse the initial creation of Genesis 1:1 into the six days beginning with Genesis 1:3. But here is a description from the antiquity of the world when there were no oceans, springs, or waters; in other words; a pre-Genesis 1:2 world, a pre-ocean-covered world. Here in Proverbs 8:22–31 in poetic wisdom genre, along with Job 26 and 34 and Psalm 104, is an entire sequence of events and conditions that fleshes out the terse statements of Genesis 1:1–2:4a. That the genre is poetic is significant in understanding it as praise to God and Wisdom. However, the genre, properly appreciated, does not cancel out, but rather enhances, the creation information given in praise of Wisdom alongside the Creator.

VARIOUS GENRES OF OVER ONE HUNDRED SHORTER CREATION TEXTS

The Hebrew Bible contains over one hundred brief references to creation in the Mosaic Law, in the history of Israel, in numerous Psalms, in wisdom literature, and in numerous references by a number of prophets. The greatest concentration of brief creation texts is in the prophetic literature ranging from Isaiah through Zechariah. These brief creation texts often exalt God in praise poetic genre. In them God may speak or they may be praise to God by the prophet. They are typically praise rather than foretelling prophetic genre. There are many different genres in these brief texts from Exodus through Zechariah. The law genre

⁶⁶ I capitalized Wisdom both because of the general personification and because Hebrews 1:2 says that the Father through the Son created the “worlds.” Here in Proverbs 8. “Wisdom” is the “craftsman” (8:30) that carried out the creation. Thus Wisdom may be seen from the N.T. writings as a personification of the Second Person, although we should not claim much theological specificity on this subject by Solomon in his time.

of Exodus 20:11 is quite different from the exaltation of God in Amos 5:8 or the narrative of Jonah 1:9.

In the Greek New Testament, there are creation texts within the historical books of the Gospels and Acts and within the epistolary literature. We need to recognize these diverse genres on the one hand, yet on the other hand appreciate the concepts about creation given to us by all these various writers of Scripture in all their varied genres.

A BALANCED APPROACH TO GENRE

Two extremes are possible concerning genre. On the one extreme, texts can be taken out of their context and their genre differences ignored. This approach is distressingly common in books advocating a particular creation theory. On the other extreme, we could cease correlating concepts from various texts of different genres altogether, thus eliminating all topical study from the Bible. But then Scripture would be all diversity and have no unity, with no center, having no unified topical or theological messages available to us.

As I compare the ten creation theories to the Biblical texts and develop the eleventh, I will try to follow the golden mean of carefully examining texts within their contexts and according to their genre but then also considering a whole theological picture of creation with both unity and diversity from the Bible. I will attempt to consider these genre differences as I correlate creation information from different texts. This approach is in keeping with both the hermeneutical practice of interpreting the text with consideration for its genre and the hermeneutical practice that Scripture interprets Scripture.

We should see both the diversity and the underlying unity of Scripture. Thus we will see the beauty of the various genres of the texts, and yet also see the core unity of the Bible—God interacting with man. The necessary beginning of that interaction is that God is our Creator. So I will be examining ten creation theories, and developing the eleventh suggested by the most exegetically supported parts of the ten. These theories are eleven different suggestions of what “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers” (Heb. 1:1) said that He did in His work of creation of the heavens and the earth.

CHAPTER 3

TWELVE HERMENEUTICAL PRACTICES

Language functions by rules: interpret according to the text's genre; interpret grammatically; interpret in context, etc. These rules have been developed *because* we tend *not* to interpret objectively. The point is we are not naturally objective. We must recognize our own subjectivity and not assume personal objectivity in our interpretation of Scripture. In order to interpret the Bible's texts on creation less subjectively, clear rules of interpreting language are needed. The following are the hermeneutics that I will be practicing. In their general form, these literary practices apply broadly to any text. However, I will be applying them to the Bible, and even more specifically to the five major and over one hundred minor creation texts. The first practices are widely recognized. But the practices further into the list are logical practices that I developed over the years I have spent in the field of creation studies. This is particularly the case with chronological markers and the concept of indicted miracles or probable processes by laws. By including these practices in this paper, I am submitting them to peer review. There are also some hermeneutical practices that are genre specific that I have not stated.

Some readers may be interested in presuppositional aspects of these practices. Undoubtedly these practices reflect my conclusion based on much evidence that the Bible contains real data about the creation ultimately from the Creator Himself, a position that I stated in chapter one.

TWELVE PRACTICES

Hermeneutics are common, and in a few cases perhaps not so common, practices for reading and interpreting a text. These practices are needed to retard subjectivism in interpretation and encourage an interpretation that is independently reproducible by others using the same practices. The more independently reproducible an interpretation is, the less subjective it would seem to be. It is this practical aspect of seeking a reproducible interpretation that is important to this study of comparing the ten creation theories to my interpretation of key creation texts.

PRACTICE 1: AUTHOR

Interpret seeking to draw the author's meaning out of the written text. There really is a text that really did have an author (recognizing that some Bible books such as Kings and Chronicles had multiple authors, compilers, or redactors). It is the task of the exegete to draw the meaning out of the author's text. Someone might claim that Jacques Derrida, the French iconoclastic father of deconstruction, destroyed the author, so now the author is irrelevant. Yet even Derrida can explain why he disagrees with author Heidegger's statement summing up the life of a philosopher. Derrida said, "Even though I'm not in agreement with Heidegger when he says, 'the life of a philosopher can be summed up as his birth, death, and thought [*poncée*], and I can explain the reasons why I'm not in agreement with him. Nevertheless, I feel close to him and I understand what he says, and in a certain manner I subscribe to his belief as well."⁶⁷ Then Derrida went on to explain how he disagreed and how he agreed with Heidegger. So Derrida did not read Heidegger's text totally as a reader-centered response because Derrida said "I understand what *he* says (emphasis added)." And Derrida partially disagreed with Heidegger and gave reasons why, yet also why "in a certain manner" the two partially agree and Derrida gave reasons why.⁶⁸

So even as Derrida used his common technique of apparent opposites to introduce fluidity of meaning, he recognized that there is a text by an author, namely Heidegger. He emphasized that the text can be read meticulously to be understood more precisely, and one can agree or disagree with statements in the text to different degrees. Even deconstruction has not destroyed the author, his or her text, or its meaning. So I agree and disagree with Derrida. I disagree with Derrida that there is such a large degree of fluidity of meaning in most texts, particularly Bible texts, that they cannot be understood. Yet I agree with him on the need for meticulous reading of the text.

The current debate on texts and meaning has brought to light helpful hermeneutical insights. From that debate we understand we cannot know the authorial intent beyond what the author wrote in context (we cannot see into the mind of the ancient author). Vanhoozer

⁶⁷ Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Kofman, directors, *Derrida*, Zeitgeist Video, 2002.

⁶⁸ *Derrida*, 2002; also see Derrida, *Heidegger et la Question: De l'esprit et autres essais*, which follows the shifting meaning of *Geist* through Heidegger's works, so also see Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*.

sees the meaning as the “embodied-enacted authorial intention.”⁶⁹ The meaning is embodied in the written text as an intentional act by the author. Meaning is not reducible to signs without intention, because the author intended to write the text to convey meaning, and then the author acted on that intention producing the text embodying his intention. Nor is intention the author’s mental state (to which we have no direct access) but the “directedness of the text as a meaningful act” by the author. By the very act of writing, intention was expressed. And that intention was embodied in the text by the author more or less successfully depending on his or her knowledge of the subject, diligence in writing, communications skills, and editorial assistance. If one believes that the Spirit of God superintended the writing of the canonical text, as I do believe, then the intention of the human author superintended by the Divine Author was successfully embodied in the Biblical text.⁷⁰

Also, we learn from the debate on meaning that our intellectual and cultural horizon and that of the ancient author differ.⁷¹ If that is so, then diligent work is needed to reduce those differences related to the particular text. We are not denying those ancient differences. We are not denying a variety of modern readers’ responses exist, some apparently close to the meaning of the text, but others missing the meaning altogether. But the very point of exegesis in the hermeneutical spiral is to bring the meticulous exegetical reader’s understanding as close to the author’s written meaning as possible. That some Bible texts are challenging does not negate the Bible authors’ abilities to communicate to us *their* meaning. As J. I. Packer stated, “One can master the argument . . . and still be unsure of the precise meaning of occasional sentences in it.”⁷² Therefore, the aim of this study is to seek to draw the meaning out of the text that the author wrote in his world by his literary devices. After understanding as best we can the author’s text from his perspective, we may relate and apply the ancient author’s meaning to our modern situation.

Applying this practice to interpreting Bible creation texts in general and Genesis 1 in particular, we should interpret Genesis 1 recognizing the author of each text and his meaning then. But in the case of Genesis 1, the question of the authorship is not simple. Moses is

⁶⁹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 252. Walter Kaiser over-emphasizes internal intention in *Toward and Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978).

⁷⁰ E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967)

⁷¹ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980).

⁷² J. I. Packer, “Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics,” in D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *Scripture and Truth*, ref. 1, 330.

widely recognized as the overall writer of the Pentateuch. It is not within the purpose of this study to enter that debate on Mosaic authorship. But even if Moses was the author of the Pentateuch (as I conclude evidence suggests, except for the postscript of Deuteronomy 34 regarding Moses' death), all the events of Genesis occurred before the time of Moses. So we may deduce that Moses received the different parts of Genesis in oral or written form. (The Bible nowhere states that God revealed the events of Genesis directly to Moses, as is stated in Exodus 20:1 of the Law.) Then, according to tradition and the testimony of the New Testament, it was Moses who compiled those oral and written family narratives into the text of Genesis, all under the superintendence of the Spirit.

But that leaves us with the question of the authorship of the oral and written traditions passed down to Moses. One of the differences between most ancient writings (*Gilgamesh Epic*, *Enuma Elish*) and modern is that the author recorded his name at the end of the tablet, not at the beginning. So we should look to the end of the unit, to the colophon *tôl' dôt*, not the beginning for the author. Genesis is a family-line series of narratives going back through Joseph, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Shem, Noah, and ultimately to Adam.

Isaiah asked, “Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?” (Isa. 40:21). Isaiah was saying that Israel had “heard” what had been “declared” (what scholars would call oral tradition⁷³) about the events going back to the foundational beginning of planet earth and even “from the beginning.” The Hebrew word “beginning is מֵרֵשֶׁת (*mē rōsh*), the same root word, רֵשֶׁת (*rōsh*; head, top, beginning), although with a different pronoun prefix, as in Genesis 1:1), or at least going back to the beginning of the oral tradition in Adam. Isaiah is claiming that the oral record from the beginning was passed down. If this is so, we may deduce that the narrative of Job 26 was passed down through Noah to Job, and that Genesis 1 was passed down through Noah and Abraham to Moses. Nothing is said about Genesis 1 being a direct revelation by God to Moses, as is stated of Job 38.

Additional evidence of an oral tradition passed down from the beginning is elements of structure in Genesis 1 parallel the first epic measure of the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* (although the *Enuma Elish* then becomes quite fanciful and polytheistic). The parallels

⁷³ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume VII, Isaiah*, (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1982), 152.

suggest that the creation narrative was not only passed down to Moses but was widely known in ancient times, embellished by polytheists, but preserved faithfully by the godly line through Noah and Abraham to Moses, as well as (in a different form) to Job and other Biblical writers. However, even before the oral tradition, before Adam, an original source of Genesis 1 existed.

No human was present at the events of Genesis 1. So, the actual Author of the account that Moses recorded as Genesis 1 was apparently the רֹחַ אֱלֹהִים (rûah 'elôhîm, Spirit of God), since He was declared to have been on location. The Spirit is consistently identified as the Person of the Godhead behind prophecy specifically and by extension behind Scripture as a whole (Num. 11:25 and numerous other texts to 2 Pet. 1:21). We may deduce that the oral tradition was passed down through the family line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph to the compiler and writer. But we may deduce from Genesis 1:2 that God the Spirit was the ultimate Author of Genesis 1. If the oral and written tradition is to be understood as from the Spirit of God, then our interpretation should be from the perspective of the Spirit.

So we should interpret seeking to draw the meaning out of the text written by the author.

PRACTICE 2: AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Interpret from the author's stated or implied physical or literary perspective. Not all texts were written from a physical perspective. But if a physical perspective of the author is stated, that perspective should be the mental perspective the reader should take to understand the author's meaning. For example, Samuel Clemens' (*nom de plume*, Mark Twain) *Huckleberry Finn* was written from a physical perspective of the Mississippi River in the pre-emancipation era. As a former river pilot, Clemens was writing from the perspective of his own earlier life experiences. That physical perspective of floating down the Mississippi River into the slave states in that pre-emancipation era gives the book its powerful impact, particularly on the inconsistency of slavery and slave laws with the American ideal of freedom.

Applying this practice to creation, we should interpret Genesis 1 from the perspective of the author. If Genesis 1 was from the Spirit of God, who was on location, then the

perspective of the Author of Genesis 1 was recorded as וַיִּרְאוּ אֶל־הַיָּהוָה וַיִּפְּחוּ אֶת־פְּנֵיהֶם וַיִּבְּחוּ אֶת־רַגְלֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁתָּחוּ וַיִּפְּחוּ אֶת־פְּנֵיהֶם וַיִּבְּחוּ אֶת־רַגְלֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁתָּחוּ (*v^erûah 'elôhîm m^erahefet 'al-penê hamāyim*). Since the perspective of the Author was just above the planet's deep ocean waters, only what was evident from that location would have been recorded in Genesis 1.⁷⁴ This perspective is a location understandable by all successive generations of readers.

Although they would not claim this, advocates of the young earth creation scientific creationism theory seems to assume a perspective of outer space. If Genesis 1 is interpreted from an outer space perspective, then “earth” in 1:1 supposedly was matter spread across the entire universe, and the deep sea was “a pervasive watery matrix throughout the darkness of space.”⁷⁵ On the first day, light appeared suddenly throughout all of outer space instead of on earth's dark sea. (This presents a problem with day and night.) On the second day, some of the same group posit the water “above the firmament” to have been water somewhere in outer space. Then on the fourth day “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky” meant the creation of the universe 6,000 years ago in outer space instead of lights being in earth's sky for the first time above the location of the Spirit. Such an outer space perspective would have been foreign to the men who passed down the narrative, to Moses the writer, and to his readers until the time of modern astronauts.

So we should interpret from the author's perspective.

PRACTICE 3: IMPLIED OR STATED AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

Interpret recognizing the implied or stated purpose (or purposes) of the book. Each author or compiler of the text had a purpose in writing the book or unit. Attempt to discover and understand the author's purpose and interpret with that purpose in mind.

The purpose of Genesis and Exodus is widely recognized as a polemic against the polytheistic gods and instead emphatically declaring there is one God, Yahweh, our Creator. This purpose is especially evident in Genesis 1 in which God is the Creator of all else, and in Exodus by the plagues in which the gods of Egypt were decisively routed.

An example of disregarding the author's purpose is the error of importing ANE mythological chaos theology into the creation account. If Genesis is a polemic against the

⁷⁴ Hugh Ross, *the Genesis Question* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998), 22-24.

⁷⁵ Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 50.

pagan gods of ANE mythology, then two main points of Genesis 1 are that God created *ex nihilo* all that exists and that God created order. If God created everything *ex nihilo*, then nothing remotely equals God. There was no preexisting chaos in the Bible, as in of ANE creation texts. Moreover, what God created was good and orderly, not chaos. תִּהְיֶה וְיִבְרָא (tōhû v'ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) is the only phrase that could possibly indicate chaos. But the only two other uses of these combined terms indicate an uninhabitable, uninhabited condition; not chaos. Thus, Moses’ purpose of a polemic against ANE theology runs absolutely counter to the idea of importing ANE preexisting chaos into the Genesis 1 text.

So we should interpret seeking to discover and understand the author’s purpose(s).

PRACTICE 4: SEMANTICS

Interpret words within the semantic range of the author’s era. We must be aware of diachronic changes in words to avoid semantic anachronisms. We must also recognize the semantic range of words within the author’s era and attempt to discern which meaning out of that semantic range the author intended. Authors do intend meaning by words.

Again we may refer to the example of deconstructionist Jacques Derrida. Because of the anti-Semitism by French school children in El-Biar, Algeria against him in 1940 when as a French Jew he was expelled from his *lycée* by the Vichy government, he states, “I exercise an extreme vigilance against all acts of anti-Semitism.”⁷⁶ Perhaps as a result, in 1998 he spoke on “*réconciliation*” but (as I understand him) not necessarily “*pardon*” at the University of Western Cape, South Africa. The words “*antisémitisme*,” “*réconciliation*” and “*pardon*” have very real meanings even to Derrida with his commitment to irony and improvisation in speech. That these words had specific meanings in his actual conversations is evident by how carefully he distinguished between “*réconciliation*” and “*pardon*.”⁷⁷ In fact he stated, “But since I am a philosopher who tries to be rigorous with what’s said and tries to understand the meaning of words and evaluate their sense and implication, I refrain from calling these [*réconciliation*] situations examples of pure forgiveness [*pardon*].” The meaning of a word in the author’s sentence is not amorphous. Its sense or meaning should be

⁷⁶ Derrida, 2002.

⁷⁷ Derrida, 2002.

rigorously understood.⁷⁸ In contrast, the applications and implications of a word in context may be many and quite varied. Certainly “*antisémitisme*” takes many forms and “*pardon*” applies to many situations and has many implications. But each word Derrida used in his sentences had a specific intended sense or meaning chosen out of its semantic range, a meaning that overarches the many applications and implications. That meaning can be rigorously deduced from the semantics of the sentence in context within which the word is embedded.

An example of an interpretative error related to semantic range is the meanings of בָּרָא (‘*bārā’*, “create”) and אָסַח (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”). On the one hand is the error of ignoring semantic overlap. On the other hand is the error of considering בָּרָא (‘*bārā’*, “create”) and אָסַח (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”) to be often interchangeable, to largely overlap.

In a recent book, Gorman Gray seems to tend toward the first error of overlooking semantic overlap of בָּרָא (‘*bārā’*, “create”) and אָסַח (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”). He correctly recognized that אָסַח (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”) in neither Genesis 1:16 nor Exodus 20:11 means “created.” But he over-reached in his defense by completely leaving out of the semantic range of אָסַח (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”) the sense of “create,” thus ignoring the small semantic overlap between בָּרָא (‘*bārā’*, “create”) and אָסַח (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”).⁷⁹ Standard lexicography includes “create” as one of the meanings of both Hebrew terms.⁸⁰ Ignoring the semantic overlap is unnecessary to make his point. That these two words have some overlap does not require that all of their senses overlap or are identical. בָּרָא (‘*bārā’*, “create”) has several senses: (1) create *ex nihilo*, (2) form out of materials, and 3) a summary of all God’s creation work including both the previous senses. אָסַח (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”) overlaps בָּרָא (‘*bārā’*, “create”) in least senses 2 and 3, although not with exactly the same nuanced meaning. But אָסַח (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”) also has many senses outside the semantic range of בָּרָא (‘*bārā’*, “create”). Gray did not need to ignore the overlap to demonstrate from context

⁷⁸ No doubt this is only one side of Derrida’s thinking. He was concerned that philosophers, including himself, tend to avoid speaking and writing of personal things, but instead dissimulate. Also he was concerned that speech is “to some extent blind.” He saw speech as primarily parroting and desired “improvisation” in speech, although he supposed that cannot be achieved. Interestingly, he had some sense of “The Other.” I personally find his filmed discussions more enlightening than his heavy writing. However, he considered the editing of his conversations the biography, not of himself, but of the editor.

⁷⁹ Gorman Gray, *The Age of the Universe: What Are the Biblical Limits* (Washougal, WA: Morningstar Publications, 2000), 23.

⁸⁰ VanGemeren, Vol. 3, *Asah*, (#6913), 549; Vol. 1, *Bara*, (#1343), 728.

that הָאֵשׁ (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”) in neither Genesis 1:16 nor Exodus 20:11 means “created” in the first sense of solely *creatio ex nihilo*.

In his opposition to Gray, young earth creation theory advocate Don Batten made the opposite error. He claims, “‘make’ and ‘create’ (Heb. *bara*) are used interchangeably in Genesis 1,”⁸¹ that is, אֲבָרָא (*bārā’*, “create”) and הָאֵשׁ (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”) have the same single meaning in all nine uses of the two terms in Genesis 1. This “single sense” error results in all kinds of problems. In Genesis 1:26 God said “Let us make [הָאֵשׁ, ‘*āsāh*] man in our image.” Genesis 2:7 is very clear that God formed Adam from dust. Thus אֲבָרָא (*bārā’*, “create”) in Genesis 1:26 is used in the second sense of אֲבָרָא (*bārā’*, “create”), form out of materials (not *ex nihilo* in the first sense of אֲבָרָא, *bārā’*, “create”). Is Batten positing that the supposed single sense in Genesis 1 could not be *creatio ex nihilo* but *creatio ex materia*? If so, perhaps that is the reason Batten sees Genesis 1:1 as merely a summary of 1:3–31 instead of the traditional view that Genesis 1:1 was the initial *ex nihilo* creation, the first sense of אֲבָרָא (*bārā’*, “create”). Dropping *ex nihilo* creation in Genesis 1:1 is a high price to pay to sustain the young earth creation view. Batten is in error. Words have polysemy. אֲבָרָא (*bārā’*, “create”) and הָאֵשׁ (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”) exhibit polysemy in Genesis 1. Contra Batten, אֲבָרָא (*bārā’*, “create”) and הָאֵשׁ (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”) have several different senses in Genesis 1. אֲבָרָא (*bārā’*, “create”) in Genesis 1:1 has the sense of *creatio ex nihilo* but in 1:27 has the sense of *creatio ex materia*. In summary, the polysemic range of words may allow overlap, but because of the semantic range of the polysemy of the different words such overlap is rarely complete and synonymous.

Because of the polysemy of words we must identify the specific meaning out of the semantic range of the word that the author indicated by the semantics of the entire sentence in context.

PRACTICE 5: AVOID SEMANTIC AND CONCEPTUAL ANACHRONISMS

A semantic anachronism “fallacy occurs when a late use of a word is read back into earlier literature.”⁸² D. A. Carson offered an example of this fallacy: “Our word dynamite is etymologically derived from the Greek word *dunamis* (*S# 1411*) meaning power. I do not

⁸¹ Don Batten, “‘Soft’ gap sophistry,” *Creation*, 26:3, 46.

⁸² D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 32.

know how many times I have heard preachers offer some such rendering of Romans 1:16 as this: ‘For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the *dynamite* of God unto salvation to every one that believeth . . . (KJV).’ Did Paul think of dynamite when he penned this word? Dynamite blows things up, tears things down, rips out rock, gouges holes, destroys things.” In contrast, the power of God builds up producing “wholeness and perfection implicit in the consummation of our salvation.”⁸³ We must avoid forcing a modern meaning back into a word in an ancient text.

A conceptual anachronism occurs when a later social, political, ideological, or scientific *concept*, usually of the interpreter’s own era, is read back into earlier literature. This problem is related to one sense of historicism, “a method of literary criticism that emphasizes the historicity of a text by relating it to the configurations of power, society, or ideology in a given time.”⁸⁴ The term “historicism” (or “historism”) has so many senses⁸⁵ that instead I will use the phrase “conceptual anachronism.” The point is that we must *not* interpret an ancient text according to the “configurations of power, society, or ideology” of our culture in our modern era.

In an example from the creation, eleven times Job and the prophets say that God נָטָה, יָרָד (*nātāh*, stretched out) the heavens. Gerald Schroeder has added some interesting ideas to the theological conversation on creation. But he tends toward this error of conceptual anachronism. Concerning the expansion of the universe, he discusses the very early hyper-expansion of the singularity called the “inflationary epoch.” He says, “The biblical allusion to this onetime inflation is found in Genesis 1:2. ‘And darkness was on the face of the deep [the primordial space created at the beginning], and a wind of God [a onetime force mentioned only here in all of Genesis] moved on the face of the water’” (brackets are

⁸³ Carson, *Fallacies*, 33-34.

⁸⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica, 2004 ultimate reference suite DVD.

⁸⁵ Karl Popper in his critique in *The Poverty of Historicism* used the term “historicism” to mean the use of history and other social sciences to discern trends or even historical laws for predicting the future. Nineteenth century German historians used the term to mean that social and cultural phenomena are determined by their place and time in history, so no absolutes transcend that era, culture, and place. Thus, to understand that era, one must accept their viewpoint, emptying oneself of one’s modern viewpoint. Both these understandings involve some degree of historical and cultural determinism. In eschatology, the term “historicism” is used to mean a view of the fulfillment of predictions of the book of Revelation in past history, particularly in the first century. Several other definitions exist, such as an excessive regard for past institutions, traditions, architecture, etc. Out of all this, I agree with the point that one should attempt to interpret an ancient document from the document’s own ancient viewpoint.

Schroeder's). Then he goes on to explain, "A force, this wind of God, was required to start motion, the expansion of the black hole, which was the entire universe." Claiming that the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים (*rûah 'elôhîm*), which he translates as the "wind of God" instead of the "Spirit of God," was the "force" that started hyper-inflation of the black hole singularity into the expanding universe during the "inflationary epoch" is a conceptual anachronism.

In contrast, Hugh Ross believes those eleven references correspond to the expansion of the universe. But he is careful *not* make an anachronism claim such as, "By this term *natah*, Isaiah meant the big bang and the expanding space-time continuum." What we may say is that eleven times Job and the prophets declared that God stretched out the heavens. The vocabulary and understanding of Job and the prophets in their era indicated that God stretched out the realm of the stars in the sky. This stretching out the realm of the stars would seem to *correspond* to Edwin Hubble's discovery that the universe is indeed stretching out or expanding. This correspondence is evidence that the Creator, who has been expanding the universe, also superintended the writing of the Scriptures, because only the Creator of the expanding universe could have known about this stretching out before modern science. The ancient statements of Scripture and the modern scientific discovery *correspond*. But when they used the term נָטָה, נָ (nātâh, stretch out), the ancient writers Job or the prophets did not *mean* the modern concepts of "expanding space-time" of the "the big bang."

To avoid the error of anachronism, each word, phrase, and sentence should be interpreted within the world of the author. Interpreters should practice distancing by separating themselves from their own worldviews toward the author's worldview to the degree they are able.

But can we relate that ancient meaning to current issues? In an overreaction, nineteenth century German historicism (or *historismus*) posited that the ancient Bible text does not relate to the modern era. But that is patently false, for sin, salvation, and righteousness taught in the Bible relate to people from all eras, languages, and nations (Rom. 3:23; Rev. 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 17:15). The ancient text does relate to today, but we must exercise caution in how we relate that ancient text to our modern situation. We should interpret the ancient text within the milieu of the ancient author. The meaning remains the ancient meaning in its historical context. If that ancient meaning was superintended by the all-knowing Spirit (not going as far as *sensus plenior* of a deeper meaning intended by God

but not by the human author), then the ancient meaning may be compatible with and correspond to a modern scientific discovery or current fulfillment pre-known by the Spirit. But that modern discovery or fulfillment should be seen as corresponding to the ancient text rather than being the meaning of the ancient text. So we *must not* read back into the ancient text a meaning or a modern concept that the ancient author could not have meant. That would be the fallacy of semantic or conceptual anachronism.

An example of this error by the young earth creation camp is defining “heavens” in Genesis 1:1 as “space”⁸⁷ a modern concept. In Deuteronomy 4:19 Moses described the “heavens” as “sun, moon, or stars” in the sky. So heavens in Genesis 1:1 should be interpreted today within the semantic range of Moses in his time, which may best be understood as “sun, moon, or stars” in the sky. The young earth creation theory also defines “earth” as all matter in the universe. Defining “heavens” as space or space-time and “earth” as all matter in the universe are examples of the fallacy of anachronism, modern meanings or concepts beyond the range of meanings or concepts Moses could have used in his ancient era.

When we interpret a word, we must limit ourselves to a meaning within the semantic range and conceptual limits of the ancient human author. We may recognize correspondence to modern concepts that the Ultimate Author has always known and that modern scientists now are discovering or fulfillments we now know in detail that the ancient author only predicted concisely. But forcing a modern concept or meaning back into the ancient author’s words is the error of anachronism.

PRACTICE 6: SYNTAX IN SENTENCES

Interpret words in the syntax of their sentences (in context), not in isolation from the syntax. “*Eine Bedeutung eines Wortes ist eine Art seiner Verwendung.*”⁸⁹ Words in isolation from their employment in a sentence only have a semantic range of possible lexical meanings. We must avoid the fallacy of “illegitimate totality transfer”⁹⁰ of importing into a word a broader semantic range of lexical meanings than the context warrants. Instead, we can

⁸⁷ Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, 20; *Scientific Creationism* (San Diego: Christian-Life Publishers, 1974), 210.

⁸⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969), 10.

⁹⁰ D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 62.

determine which lexical meaning in the semantic range of each word was intended in the author's text by the syntax, context, and *Verwendung* in a sentence. We understand syntax (the origin of the term from συν and τάξις may be suggestive, but the etymology is not the meaning) as the pattern of relationships of the words in a sentence by which they work together to create the intended meaning. Syntax includes descriptive (not prescriptive) grammar but goes beyond grammar with a stronger emphasis on the relationships of the words that create the intended meaning. Only in sentences do words have relationships and therefore a limitation on their semantic range. Sentences, not words in isolation, carry the author's intent, so we interpret words by their use and relationships in the syntax of their sentences.

Hugh Ross has defined the controversy over the meaning of יוֹם (yôm, "day") too narrowly. By "meaning" he actually emphasizes semantic range rather than the limited authorial meaning in the context of Genesis 1. He correctly agrees that the variety of definitions are limited by the context and grammar. But his main arguments focus almost exclusively on the semantic range of meanings of יוֹם (yôm, "day") and the surrounding time words. Ross goes to great lengths to show that the semantic range of יוֹם (yôm) extends beyond a single day-night-cycle twenty-four-hour day. But the semantic range of יוֹם (yôm) beyond a single day-night-cycle twenty-four-hour day is no new insight. His very brief discussion of syntax only suggests possible "ambiguity"⁹¹ but does not give any syntactical evidence in Genesis 1 for יוֹם (yôm) meaning "millions of years" in that context. Syntax, not semantic range, limits the specific meaning of a word in a particular sentence in a pericope. The syntax of Genesis 1:5 relates יוֹם (yôm) in a specific pattern to אֵר (ôr, light, daylight, sunlight), חֹשֶׁךְ (khōshek, darkness, obscurity), לַיְלָה (lā'yēlāh, night), עֶרֶב (erev, evening), and בֹּקֶר (bōqer, morning). That pattern of relationships of these terms in the syntax of 1:5 militates against his meaning of the word יוֹם (yôm) as millions of years. Genesis 1:5 then sets the meaning for the successive five occurrences in Genesis 1:8, 13, 19, 23, and 31. Ross has built his case on lexical range without citing significant syntactical evidence for יוֹם (yôm) in Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31 meaning "millions of years." Without syntactical evidence, his case is at best

⁹¹ Hugh Ross, *Creation and Time* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), 48.

problematic and unproven. Whether right or wrong about the age of the universe, Ross has argued his case in the wrong way—by semantic range almost exclusively.

Gerald Schroeder has offered some helpful insights, but he sometimes errs in ignoring the grammar of a sentence. He ignores the subject in the sentence $\text{וְהָאֲרֶזֶל וְהָאֲדָמָה וְהָאֲרֶזֶל וְהָאֲדָמָה}$, “And the earth was $t\bar{o}h\hat{u} v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\hat{u}$.” The subject of this sentence is “the earth.” But Schroeder ignores the subject and instead applies $t\bar{o}h\hat{u} v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\hat{u}$ to the initial state of the plasma of the big bang before the formation of hydrogen and helium.⁹² This misuse of the phrase is in keeping with his theory that the six days began with the big bang, but it ignores the grammar and vocabulary of Genesis 1:2. This is an example of a rabbinic cabalistic style of interpretation⁹³ of mystical “deeper meanings” in the Hebrew Bible, a method Schroeder freely admits.⁹⁴ However, adding mystical “deeper meanings” loses the crucial text-based semantic and syntactic control over the meaning of the text. This error is also an example of a conceptual anachronism.

So we should interpret the author’s words in the syntax of the sentences in which he wrote them.

PRACTICE 7: LITERARY CONTEXT

Interpret each sentence in its literary contexts. The contexts are the surrounding pericopae, the larger literary unit, the whole book, the previous Bible books known by the human author, and, from a theological perspective, the whole Bible as pre-known by the ultimate Author, the Spirit of God.⁹⁵

⁹² Gerald L. Schroeder, *Genesis and the Big Bang* (New York: Bantam, 1990), 49.

⁹³ Cabala (also spelled Cabbalah, Kabala, Kabbalah and Qabbala) is based on the Hebrew term קַבְּלָה meaning “reception.” This rabbinic method of interpretation of the Torah is “received” by oral tradition, supposedly back to Moses and ultimately God. The mystical esoteric “soul” of the Torah is “received” in the form of special insights giving the initiate hidden meanings of the text. These hidden meanings are esoteric knowledge of the divine nature, His creation of the universe, and His laws governing nature. These insights are considered special knowledge of secret meanings received by oral tradition, meanings not obvious to the reader of the text using normal linguistic grammatical exegesis. Cabala claims that every letter, every word had many significances.

⁹⁴ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 19–22.

⁹⁵ This last point of the whole Bible as the context deserves caution. On the one hand, we should not import into that author’s sentences later meanings from Bible books that had not yet been written so were unknown by the human author. But on the other hand, if the human author’s words have two possible meanings, one compatible with subsequent Scripture but the other clearly contra subsequent Scripture, the meaning that is in agreement with subsequent Scripture is the meaning we should choose because of the pre-knowledge of the Spirit overseeing the human author’s writing.

An example related to creation is the young earth creationists' practice of taking Exodus 20:11 out of its context in the fourth commandment. The key word in that text, עָשָׂה (*'āsâh*), has the basic sense of “do, make,” which can be expanded in its semantic range to include the senses “do work” and “create.” Advocates of the young earth creation theory assume עָשָׂה (*'āsâh*) means “create” in Exodus 20:11, that God created the heavens, earth, and sea within the six days. But the context of 20:11 is the fourth command, that Israel was to work six days but not work on the seventh. If the context of 20:11 is work, then the choice of meaning from the semantic range of עָשָׂה (*'āsâh*) in 20:11 should be that God “made” in the sense of “did work” on the objects to make them conform to His plan. The timeframe focus of 20:11 is the six days. Genesis 1:2 explains that the earth was unfinished, so the finishing work of the six days contextually applies to earth. Therefore the meaning of Exodus 20:11 is that for six days God did work on the materials of planet earth that He had created in 1:1 but had left unfinished according to 1:2 prior to the six days. Then God rested on Shabbat as the warrant for Israel to work six days and rest on Shabbat. Since the fourth commandment is not about creation but about work, the meaning of עָשָׂה (*'āsâh*) in 20:11 is not “create.” By taking Exodus 20:11 out of its context of work, young earth creationists have read 20:11 as if God created *ex nihilo* everything including the heavens and earth within the six days. Thus they have changed the obvious meaning of Genesis 1:1 from God created the heavens and earth in the beginning to God created the heavens and earth on day one (within the six days) in order to fit their system built on their non-contextual reading of Exodus 20:11. The aphorism is true that “a text without a context is a pretext”—in this case, a pretext for a 6,000-year-old universe.

Another error recently widely and persistently propagated by 6,000-year-old universe advocates is “thousands, not millions,” meaning that everything (universe and earth, as well as Adam) is thousands, not millions of years old. By this oft repeated phrase they are violating context. The basis for thousands of years is the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 10-11. I readily agree that the Bible dates Adam thousands, not millions of years ago. Contextually these genealogies go back to Adam. The genealogies are never stated to be the years of the universe. 6,000-year-old universe advocates are violating this fundamental hermeneutical rule of context by broadly applying “thousands, not millions” of years to the universe as its Biblical age.

The literary context of the creation passage of Job 26 is how we view God. In Job 25, Bildad claimed that we cannot know about the work of God, implying that we cannot know God because man cannot be made “righteous before God.” In fact, Bildad claimed that man is a “maggot,” a “worm,” and even the creation is “not pure.” Job did not agree. He argued the opposite in chapter 26 by recounting creation events that he knew (apparently from oral tradition from Adam or Eve), proving that the creation was from God, humans could know about it from God, and implying that the creation as it came from God was pure. Job correctly claimed that we can know at least some of God’s work even though the full power of God’s work is beyond our full understanding. We really can know God, even though to a limited degree, partly because we can see His work in creation. We understand Job 26, including the creation argument, by reading it in context.

So we should interpret each sentence in its literary contexts—the surrounding pericopae, the larger literary unit, the whole book, the previous Bible books known by the human author, and to some degree the whole Bible as pre-known by the ultimate Author, the Spirit of God.

PRACTICE 8: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Interpret texts by historical, cultural, and geographical details primarily *within* the text, and only secondarily nuancing (not reversing the meaning of) texts by historical, cultural, geographical, and archeological knowledge from *outside* the text. To interpret the text by modern ideologies outside the text is even worse—the fallacy of conceptual anachronism.

The basic meaning of a Bible text is found *in the text* in its semantics and syntax in its genre including historical, cultural, and geographical information in the text and its context. Historical, cultural, and geographical context *outside* the Bible should enhance and nuance the meaning but should not be used to reverse or annul the basic meaning found within the Bible text. Often Biblical authors included historical, cultural, and geographical details in the context of a text because the authors considered those details crucial to the meaning. The fact that Biblical authors did not include a particular cultural detail that someone wants to use to overturn or annul the apparent meaning of a text should raise a red flag of warning to the careful exegete.

An error related to Genesis is that historical, cultural, and geographical details within the Pentateuch have been dismissed as inferior mythic inventions. Such condescension is pejorative toward the Biblical authors and is a “backdoor” negative example of conceptual anachronism. It is interpreting the Bible by our modern prejudices against the ancient history and culture. Moses was trained in the culture of royal Egypt, which had developed a rather sophisticated understanding of astronomy, agriculture, writing, and government. Therefore such details in Moses’ writings should not be underestimated.⁹⁶

So we should interpret texts by historical, cultural, and geographical details primarily *within* the text, and only secondarily by historical, cultural, geographical, and archeological knowledge from *outside* the text. And we should avoid conceptual anachronism either positively of importing our modern ideologies into the text or negatively of denigrating the ancient history and culture of the author and readers of the text.

PRACTICE 9: GENRE

Interpret a text according to its genre.

Genre is a type of literature. Each genre has its own style, tone, format, and purpose. Biblical genres are a subset of literary genres in general. A variety of Biblical genres is to be expected because the Bible was composed by some forty different authors with varying purposes, eras, and situations. Large Bible genre categories include narrative history, law, wisdom literature, poetry, prophecy (proclamation, prediction, and apocalypse), parable, and epistle. These contain briefer subunits within the larger genres. Some examples of briefer genres are *haustafeln*, lament, hymns, report, annals, etiology, and many more. For example, the larger genre historical narrative may contain within it a hymn or an etiology.

Concerning creation texts, although each text has its own theological purpose and genre, these aspects do not detract from the texts’ being reliable reports of the creation events. Job 26:7–14 is part of a wisdom literature lament. Psalm 136:5–9 is part of a hymn of thanksgiving to Yahweh. Each must be interpreted according to its specific genre, yet each still conveys to us within that genre a greater understanding of the creation events. So on the one hand, we must interpret within the type of genre. But on the other hand, in our search for

⁹⁶ J. Norman Lockyer, *Dawn of Astronomy* (Cassell and Co., 1894); Evan Hadingham, *Early Man and the Cosmos* (N.Y.: Walker and Co.), 1984.

the whole Biblical picture of creation, we cannot ignore data from creation texts in wisdom literature, psalms, or prophetic literature simply because they are different genres.

An example of a problematic approach when one considers genre is the framework approach to Genesis 1. Lee Irons and Meredith Kline have added to our understanding of the literary framework format of Genesis 1, and we can appreciate their contribution. However, the large genre of Genesis 1 is historical narrative.⁹⁷ Genesis 1 has typical historical narrative markers of the repeated *vav* consecutives and consecutively numbered time units of evenings, mornings, and days. Inherent in historical narrative particularly with sequentially numbered time units is sequential events. So Irons' and Kline's insight that Genesis 1 has a literary framework is helpful, but their conceptual leap that therefore this narrative is "nonsequential" and "nonliteral"⁹⁸ seems to run counter to the genre.

So we should interpret each text according to its genre.

PRACTICE 10: HEBREW REPETITIVE STYLISTIC PATTERNS

Interpret recognizing repeated stylistic patterns that identify text units. Particularly in Hebrew texts, repeated stylistic patterns may identify linguistic units. An example is the $\text{נָחַם דָּוֶן} \text{ (} \textit{tôl}^e \textit{dôt}$, generational-annals) unit subdivisions of Genesis. Double layers of units also exist, as in Genesis 1:3–31. Lee Irons and Meredith Kline have suggested the literary framework format of Genesis 1.⁹⁹ Bruce Waltke has suggested basically the same. The Genesis 1 text contains eight units of announcement, command, separation, report, naming, and evaluation,¹⁰⁰ but only six chronological day units, six "and there was evening and there was morning day X."

In repeated units, differences in the units must be considered in interpretation. In the above example, "day one" is cardinal, but the next six days are numbered with the ordinal, "second day," "third day," etc., making day one unique. How and why day one is different must be considered. Also the seventh day has no chronological ending, making it unique in a different way.

⁹⁷ John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*.

⁹⁸ Lee Irons and Meredith G. Kline, "The Framework View," *The Genesis Debate*, 219.

⁹⁹ Irons, "Framework," 219.

¹⁰⁰ Waltke, *Genesis*, 56.

So we should interpret recognizing repeated stylistic patterns that identify text units. Also we should note deviations from the normal pattern and seek to determine if there is a significant reason for that deviation.

PRACTICE 11: CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE MARKERS

Interpret Bible narrative as intentionally historical and chronological. Intentionally historical narrative assumes that the events are in sequential chronological order unless that text or other texts require otherwise.

Hebrew grammar provides markers such as the seemingly monotonous (to non-Semitic language speakers) use of the *vav-consecutive* for identifying intentionally sequential historical narrative literature. So we should interpret such purposefully narrative texts in the Bible as intending to convey historical events in chronological order, no doubt also with theological overtones. To interpret figuratively an intentionally narrative text is to ignore the author's linguistic signs in the text and to create one's own, uncontrolled, fabricated new "meanings."

Although occasionally Bible authors "dischronologize" for theological reasons,¹⁰¹ we should assume that events in a Scripture narrative are chronological, unless that text or other Bible texts require otherwise. This assumption is based on the nature of Hebrew narrative employing the exceedingly common paratactic *vav* consecutive indicating temporally sequential events.

Concerning creation, this assumption of chronological reporting of events certainly applies to the narrative in Gen. 1—3 with the repetitive use of the paratactic initial *vav* consecutives, the sequentially numbered days and obviously sequential events involving Adam and Eve. The other major texts on creation, Job 9:5–9, Job 26:7–14, Job 38:4ff., Psalm 104:1–9, and Proverbs 8:23–31, are not narrative literature. However, since they follow the same sequence of events as in Genesis 1, which we may consider the foundational text, we may deduce that they, too, are in chronological order. Chronological interpretation is actually the norm in reporting events, Biblical or otherwise, and is employed across a wide spectrum of genres such as sagas, histories, reports, novellas, or annals. Thus, unless the Bible itself

¹⁰¹ The temptations of Jesus in the wilderness, cf. Matt. 4 to Luke 4.

requires otherwise, we may interpret texts assuming the events are in sequential chronological order.

When two or more texts report the same events, we may use shared chronological markers to integrate these related texts into a single chronological sequence. Even if the texts contain an event unique to only one text, the texts usually have several shared events which can be used as coordinating chronological markers. These chronological markers correlate the texts into a chronological sequence by aligning the shared events. Finally, the details unique to each text may be integrated in proper chronological sequence between the marker events. For example if Text I contains events C, F, G, H, J, K; Text II contains events A, B, C, D, E, F, H, I, J; and Text III contains H, J, K, L; then we may align them as follows:

Text I:		C		F	G	H		J	K			
Text II:	A	B	C	D	E	F		H	I	J		
Text III:								H	J	K	L	
Combined:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L

The above diagram is somewhat oversimplified. Although I have not seen this practice stated as I have just outlined, it is commonly used to align the four Gospels, such as the *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*.¹⁰² Since the *Synopsis* uses this method, I am not doing anything extraordinary or novel.

In the case of creation, the Bible contains five major creation texts, as well as over one hundred briefer texts, many with multiple chronological markers as well as unique details. Integrating these texts is a complex task. For example, Job 26:8–9 and Job 38:9 refer to a cloud enveloping the sea, causing darkness on the face of the sea. Genesis 1:2b also reports darkness on the face of the deep. Then Job 26:10 describes a horizon on the face of the deep separating light and darkness, evidently the same event as day one in Genesis 1. Thus both the cloud in Job 26:8–9 and 38:9 and the darkness on the face of the deep sea in Genesis 1:2 may be related because both precede day one. Since thick, dark cloud would cause darkness on the surface of the sea, we may infer a causal link. Since the thick, dark cloud is reported in both Job 26:8–9 and 38:9, but 26:8-9 preceded day one, then we may understand the previous verse, Job 38:8, as the sea bursting forth at its formation and then being covered by cloud, rather than 38:8 referring to the Noahic flood.

¹⁰² Kurt Aland, *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1985).

So we should interpret Bible narrative as intentionally historical and in sequential chronological order unless that text or other texts require otherwise.

PRACTICE 12: INDICATED MIRACLE OR DIRECTED PROCESS BY DIVINE LAWS

Unless the text indicates an instantaneously completed or immediate¹⁰³ miracle or sign,¹⁰⁴ the interpretive presumption should favor the norm of a sovereignly ordered process carried out by God according to His designed physical laws and under His immanent control (Eph. 1:11).

God does *both* instantaneously completed miracles and sovereignly ordered processes. Between the two is a gradient in which He sovereignly directs otherwise regular events with timing, location, or preciseness that we would see as miraculous. We should avoid two interpretative extremes. Some critics of the Bible discount the possibility that the miracles recorded in the Bible ever occurred. In overreaction to these critics, some Bible believers emphasize every uncommon event in the Bible or in modern life as a miracle. Wayne Grudem tends toward the latter. He says, “*A miracle is a less common kind of God’s activity in which he arouses people’s awe and wonder and bears witness to himself*”¹⁰⁵ (italics his). But to define every “less common” event, such as an unusually beautiful sunset, as a miracle seems to lessen the greatness of the truly miraculous in the Bible. I know and respect Wayne Grudem as a fellow believer, but he sees too much as miraculous. He is very good natured and might even laugh and agree with me, at least “maybe.”

For the sake of clarity in this discussion I will distinguish several levels of miracles. Extraordinary or singular miracles have two subgroups. First, the initial *ex nihilo* creation of time, space, matter, energy, and physical laws and above all else the resurrection of our Lord from the dead into His glorified body (1 Cor. 6:14) are the great prime physical miracles of

¹⁰³ Almost all New Testament sign miracles were characterized by immediacy (Matt. 8:3, 13; 20:34; Mark 1:42; 5:29, 42.; etc.). A possible exception is Mark 8:22-25 in which there were two steps: When Jesus healed the blind man in two steps, it would seem that Jesus healed his eyes first so the man saw people walking like trees. Then Jesus touched his eyes again and did a second miraculous work so he saw “clearly.” The first act may have given his eyes immediate physical ability, and, the second act, given his brain immediate correct interpretive understanding, a far greater work. So immediacy seems to have occurred even in this case.

¹⁰⁴ Most miracles were also signs authenticating the person. The term “miracle” is a little broader because a miracle could have been private entirely as act of mercy without any need to authenticate the person.

¹⁰⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 355.

the Bible.¹⁰⁶ The second subgroup are extraordinary or singular instantaneous signs, wonders, or authenticating miracles that apparently go beyond the regular bounds of time, space, matter, energy, and the regular physical laws. A sign miracle or wonder recorded in the Bible tended to combine four characteristics: (a) The act was done at a word or sign by God or His agent. (b) The purpose of the act usually was to authenticate God or His messenger and message as well as commonly to benefit or judge humans (Exod. 7:1-5; Acts 14:3). (c) The act usually was *immediately or instantaneously completed* (Luke 8:47; Acts 3:7), although the results would continue, so there would be no relapse (in contrast to a non-miraculous act *completed over time* by regular processes with reverses). (d) Some aspect of the act was a departure from the regular processes that we can explain by physical laws. An example was Jesus' multiplying the loaves and fish. This act was beyond the regularities God established as physical laws, was immediate, benefited people, was done by our Lord and authenticated Him.

The Bible also records events that were within God's normal physical laws and occurred by secondary means but with miraculous timing, location, or preciseness. For example, Elijah prayed for rain and God sovereignly sent rain. The miraculous aspect was the timing, ending three missing wet seasons in Israel as God's sovereign response on the day of Elijah's prayer. But even James 5:17 does not indicate that this was a miracle in the sense of beyond the normal physical laws established by God. The means were normal, "secondary" means—rain from a cloud, small at first, rising from the sea (1 Kings 18:44), and precipitating rain over land. Even the general timing was at the fourth regular yearly wet season (after three and a half years of drought). But the exact timing was precisely the day of Elijah's prayer. That precise timing was God's wonderful miraculous work.

The initial creation, the resurrection of Christ, and acts with the four characteristics are signs, wonders, or miracles. The timing of the rain after Elijah's prayer had a miraculous aspect. But in the absence of these characteristics, our presumption in interpretation should be for a sovereignly ordered process, even if the process was unusual or a onetime process. I suggest that if the text does not indicate a miracle, we should not interpret that event, even if an unusual or onetime occurrence, as a miracle.

¹⁰⁶ Our salvation by Christ's death is a great miracle, but I am not considering spiritual transactions, although Christ's physical death was necessary to accomplish that spiritual transaction.

This conservative approach is important because the Bible portrays miracles as intentional sign events, authenticating God and His designated messengers, especially Messiah.¹⁰⁷ A sign miracle authenticating God’s messengers and their messages—Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, the prophets, Jesus and His disciples, and the two coming apocalyptic witnesses—loses its exceptionality if every “less common” event in the Bible or in our day is interpreted as a miracle.

Related to the creation, God did sovereign miracles in the creation of the universe, life, and man. But was every event in Genesis 1 and 2 an instantaneous miracle? The Bible text says, “Then God said, ‘Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth’” (Gen. 1:11). The *hiphil* רָאָה־וַיִּצְמַח־וַיִּבְרַח (*tad^esē*) means “cause to sprout.” The text says at God’s command the earth in the sense of soil *caused* the specific vegetation to sprout. Genesis 2:4-6 indicates that at first there were no plants on land because God had not yet caused it to rain. Then God brought water to the land. So the text indicates that the earth with water caused the vegetation to sprout. The text does not seem to indicate instantaneous forty-year-old trees. I suggest that where the text does not indicate a miracle, we consider the possibility that other events of Genesis 1 and 2 were processes by God’s physical laws.

The *weltanschauung* underlying this hermeneutical practice may need further explanation. I will suggest four views of God and “nature.” These four views are “solely Nature,” “sovereign Nature,” an “interventionist God,” and finally no independent “Nature” but rather the “Sovereign God” as Creator of and sovereign over all that we call nature.

The first approach is naturalism, solely nature. Naturalism presuppositionally assumes that “nature” is all there is; often “Nature” capitalized as a semi-deified entity. This is the standard scientific paradigm of most scientists in the twenty-first century. Either God does not exist (atheism), or we can never know if He does exist (agnosticism), or at least in the lab and field we must act as if He does not exist and must ignore all evidence for even intelligent design (anti intelligent design). In this paradigm the laws of Nature are not only sovereign but, along with matter-energy-time-space, are all there is or was or ever will be—the approach of Carl Sagan.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Exod. 3:12; 4:8; John 2:11; 4:54; 20:30-31; 1 Cor. 14:22; Heb. 2:3-41; and many other references.

¹¹⁰ Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 2002).

Contra this view, I propose that there is no such entity as “Nature” in the sense of a self-created autonomous entity. What is “Nature”? Is it some substitute for God as some quasi-spiritual non-personal guiding force for the universe and life on earth? But I must ask, How can a non-personal force (energy) design laws and create persons? Is “Nature” the physical laws? But then did they create themselves? Laws do not create themselves because that is a violation of one of those very laws, the necessity of a cause to have an effect, such that the cause cannot be the effect but must be an entity outside and prior to the effect. Is “Nature” the universe and life? If so, then why not use an unequivocal term such as “universe” rather than “Nature”? The great weakness of this approach is that “nature” had to create itself and all its laws, which is a contradiction of those same laws.

The second approach is sovereign nature. This is the approach taken by deism and some critics of the Bible. God may have been necessary to start the universe, but then nature took over. Perhaps this is the approach of the early Steven Hawking in which Something (but not a personal God) may have been necessary to “wind the clock,” to start the big bang.¹¹¹ Once Nature began, it became sovereign, so miracles are no longer possible. This is the ultimate “God of the gaps,” for there is only one gap—the initial instant and cause of the “big bang.” Since that initial instant, Nature rules.

The third approach is the interventionist God. God is sovereign. But at least subconsciously the adherents of this view seem to allow nature to have a quasi-independent status. In this approach God is seen constantly doing miracles to intervene with and overcome nature’s laws. Each act of creation is seen as a miracle. Adherents of the young earth creation model seem undecided and inconsistent, perhaps sometimes taking this view without even realizing it. For example, as I understand the young earth creation view, God did a miracle to create temporary light on day one. By another miracle He made the fog rise from the sea, forming an open expanse of air between the sea below and cloud above on day two. (Some have other strange interpretations of day two, believing the expanse was outer space and the water was somewhere in outer space.) By another miracle He instantly created

¹¹¹ “HAWKING: It is better not to use the word “god” to describe what I believe because most people use the word to mean a being with whom one can have a personal relationship” (Mark O’Brien, *The Unification of Stephen Hawking*, <http://www.pacificnews.org/marko/hawking.html>.) Hawking’s “god” may be of the sort Stephen Weinberg calls an “an abstract principle of order and harmony.” Weinberg chides Hawking for not using the historical meaning of the term God (<http://www.meta-library.net/intro/cosmohaw-body.html>). Hawking recently seems to have retreated from even this second approach back to the first approach.

land on day three. And by another miracle He suddenly created the fully developed universe with a fourteen-billion-year-old appearance on day four as a replacement for the temporary light from day one.¹¹² Yet on other occasions young earth creationists seek out divinely ordered processes, such as in the sources of water for the flood. The young earth creation approach seems inconsistent.

I propose a fourth approach: the Sovereign God, who does all things according to the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11). He sovereignly does both what humans see as miracles and sovereignly commands processes that work according to His decreed laws. There were real miraculous signs that God sovereignly did that are miracles in the Bible, as well as occasional real miracles today. However, most of God's work is by His transcendent sovereignly decreed and immanently supervised laws. There is no independent or autonomous "Nature" at all.

Concerning the six days after the initial creation, the time indicator was a day, not an instant. So the interpretive presumption should be that the events of the six days were initiated instantaneously at God's command but at least some may have been carried out in their fullness as a process through that day. "And it was so" before the evening morning clause indicates that the process was completed by "evening" or at the latest by "morning." On day one the initiation of light would have occurred at the instant of God's command, but the fullness of day and night at the Spirit's location transpired within the twenty-four hours. Night occurred at the Divine Narrator's location as that part of earth rotating out of the diffuse sunlight by God's designed laws, not by a miracle contra God's laws. The same would apply to day four in which the sun and fainter moon appeared to the Divine Narrator through openings in the clouds at God's command. But the stars would not have begun to appear to the Divine Narrator until evening began to approach at His location. The mention of stars is after "and it was so" because it would seem they did not appear at the instant of God's command. As the stars first began to appear, there was evening and morning of the fourth day of God's work.

¹¹² Supposedly scientific explanations have been offered of how we can have a universe appearing to be about 14 billion years old when it is actually only 6,000 to 10,000 years old. But none has been compelling enough to have been widely accepted. I am not claiming a specific age of the universe, but rather I am questioning if all these creation events were done outside the laws God decreed, as interventionist miracles rather than being done by the Sovereign God by His decreed physical laws. If the universe is however old it is without the restraint of necessarily being 6,000 years old and it normally functions by God's laws, that obviates the need for those explanations.

Thus, if we can interpret an event in the six days, even if initiated suddenly, as a process occurring according to God's sovereignly designed laws, we should do so.

Therefore, the hermeneutical practice is this: Unless the text indicates an instantaneously completed or immediate miracle, we should interpret presuming the norm of sovereignly ordered processes carried out by God according to His designed physical laws and under His immanent control. Then, when an instantaneous sign miracle occurred it was easily recognized as such.

PRACTICE 13: DISTINGUISH EXPLICIT STATEMENTS FROM IMPLICATIONS FROM SILENCE.

Meredith Kline declares, "We must speak where Scripture speaks, and be silent where Scripture is silent."¹¹³ He is right. In addition, we should interpret distinguishing between an explicit statement and an implication.

J. Barton Payne suggested time passage between the six days.¹¹⁴ This idea may be backed by a number of implications in the Bible text. I suggest caution with this idea because an implication is not an explicit statement. On the other side young earth creationists claim this idea is wrong, but that claim too is based on implications, not on an explicit statement. Young earth creationists seem to assume their conclusion. But neither side has the certainly or authority of an explicit statement. So I suggest great caution with Payne's idea.

FOUR DOUBLE CHECKS ON INTERPRETATION

Because we tend to interpret by our biases, we need double checks on our exegesis.

(1) *ANALOGIA SCRIPTURAE*

Protestant hermeneutics has always emphasized that the interpreter should check his interpretation, especially of difficult, unclear, or ambiguous texts by the *analogia scripturae*.

The *analogia scripturae* principle means that there are clear, unambiguous, plain texts of Scripture, and those simpler clearer texts may help us interpret the more difficult texts on the same subject, because Scripture agrees with itself. It is frequently said,

¹¹³ Kline and Irons, "Framework," 217-218.

¹¹⁴ J. Barton Payne, "Theistic Evolution and the Hebrew of Genesis 1-2," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 8 (1965), 87.

“Scripture is its own best interpreter.” The analogy of Scripture is built on two logical steps: (1) God cannot lie or contradict Himself. (2) God the Holy Spirit inspired the autographs of Scripture (and supernaturally preserved the text so that we have essentially the same inspired text), so Scripture cannot lie or contradict itself. Thus divine inspiration of the whole Bible has produced a unified multifaceted message, and that unity enables the exegete to use clearer texts to gain assistance on a difficult text. Naturally, those who deny inspiration question the *analogia scripturae*. But if one accepts inspiration, as I do, then this check on our interpretation makes sense because all Scripture is ultimately from the same Author.

Closely related to the *analogia scripturae* is the *analogia fidae* of the corporate theological restraint on excesses in interpretation.

(2) *ANALOGIA FIDAE*

Post-reformation protestant hermeneutics also emphasized the *analogia fidae*. The *analogia fidae* is the widely accepted understanding within the church of the basic doctrines and ethics of Scripture. The analogy of faith is built on an additional third logical step: Not only can God not lie or contradict Himself, so Scripture cannot lie or contradict itself, but third, “The Faith,” as the “core of Christian doctrines flows faithfully from the text.”¹¹⁵

In the last century the rule of faith has been criticized as too restrictive. However, this criticism is actually pertinent only in an over-reaching of the rule of faith. For example, Dan McCartney in his hermeneutics textbook *Let the Reader Understand* (which otherwise contains helpful thoughts) tells his students, “The NT’s interpretive goal is the proper framework for reading the OT. . . . This is a presupposition.”¹¹⁶ However, this presupposition of an “NT interpretative goal” seems to leave in the hands of the interpreter the task of defining that goal. But the church as a whole has not reached a consensus on what that “NT interpretative goal” is. Redemption, the glory of God, faith, holiness, and the church have all been suggested. So one’s theology would dictate the goal, and the goal dictate one’s interpretation; and the interpretation would result in that same theology one began with. There seems to be a vicious circularity in McCartney’s method. However, if exegesis is done

¹¹⁵ Henry M Knapp, “Protestant Biblical Interpretation,” in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation*, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 634.

¹¹⁶ Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1994), 70.

by the more objective grammatical-historical practices, then the hermeneutical spiral may be entered without the full charge of circularity, without the full charge of dictating interpretation, and without as much impact by one's own presuppositional biases.

Neither McCartney's "interpretive goal," nor even the "rule of faith" should dictate interpretation *during* exegesis. Exegesis should be guided by the text in context and other related texts (*analogia scripturae*). Then the rule of faith may serve as a double check on our interpretation *after the primary work of exegesis is completed*. Once the primary exegesis is completed, a tentative interpretation is produced without the rule of faith dictating. Then that tentative interpretation should enter peer review including the rule of faith, hopefully resulting in additional exegetical study nuancing the original work. This post-exegetical interaction in the hermeneutical spiral is a legitimate form of the *analogia fidae*.

Related to *analogia fidae* is reproducible exegesis.

(3) REPRODUCIBLE EXEGESIS

A test for truth widely used in science is reproducibility. A famous example is the claim by Utah professors that they had produced "cold fusion" in a beaker with the production of excess atomic energy. But no one else in the world using their process has been able to reproduce their supposed cold fusion with the production of excess atomic energy. The claim remains unsubstantiated because it has not been reproduced.

Valid exegesis resulting in an interpretation of a Bible text should be able to be reproducible from the Hebrew or Greek texts by other exegetes from around the world regardless of their culture, native language, sex, etc. Reproducibility does not mean immediate universal agreement on the conclusions. Rather reproducibility should mean that other exegetes can say, "Even if I am not sure I agree yet, I can trace their exegesis through the same Greek/Hebrew text(s) and see how they came to their interpretation. I have found no major exegetical errors; the exegesis does come out of that text; the exegesis is in keeping with the semantics, syntax, and context of the text; and peer review has failed to make a compelling counter case."

After completing the above primary double checks from within Scripture and from the exegetical community, we may secondarily consider a check from without.

(4) CAUTIOUS ERROR DETECTION BY ARCHEOLOGY AND SCIENCE

Archeology and science is deliberately listed last because their contribution is far below that of the analogy of Scripture, analogy of faith, and reproducible exegesis. Yet well-supported archeological and scientific findings may have a legitimate small contribution as a double-check *after* the interpretation of texts related to an archeological site or the physical creation. Archeology and science should never be placed over or equal to Scripture.

May I suggest that young earth creationists, rather than just continuing to try to prove by Adam's genealogy that the universe (rather than Adam) must certainly be approximately 6,000 years old, should consider first the very serious problems in their interpretation of the Bible. Then secondarily they should consider tentative findings of science suggesting the possibility of an older universe that might hint that they should double-check their interpretation. This is especially so as there is a very viable alternative in two-stage Biblical creation that does seem to fit Scripture and does not date the universe.

So we should double-check our exegesis by the analogy of Scripture, the analogy of faith, and reproducible exegesis. Finally we may cautiously benefit from science and archeology as possible error detectors. Using the above hermeneutical practices, double checks, and peer review, we may come closer to understanding the answer to our question, "What does the Bible say that God did when He created the heavens and the earth?"

PART THREE—
DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS AND TEN CREATION THEORIES

Comparing ten theories in a single thesis or dissertation is usually avoided because the number of different theories is almost unmanageable. To make this study manageable, I am introducing four pairs of diagnostic questions to sort the ten theories into groups. These four question pairs match the two sides of each of the four main issues that separate the ten theories from each other.

CHAPTER 4

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS AND SUMMARIES OF CREATION THEORIES

What does the Bible say that God did when He created the heavens and the earth? To answer this question, we will ask four pairs of diagnostic questions directed to the creation theories. Each of the ten theories will especially relate to one side of one or more of the diagnostic questions.

FOUR PAIRS OF DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

The ten creation theories plus the eleventh combined theory answer the pairs of diagnostic questions differently. The theories' answers can then be evaluated against the Bible creation texts, related to that question, exegeted using the hermeneutics previously stated to determine the most exegetically supported claims of the various theories. Then these well-supported claims and the Bible creation texts can be considered together to produce the claims of the eleventh combined theory. These are the four pairs of diagnostic questions:

(A) *Day-Night-Cycle Days or Day-age Geologic Eras?* Does the text of Genesis 1 indicate that the days were daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle creation days? (Whether sequential in 144 hours as suggested by young earth advocates, or with time between the days as suggested by J. Barton Payne, is a different issue.) Or does the text of Genesis 1 indicate long day-age geological eras or non-creation days?

(B) *Creation of Cosmos and Unfinished Earth or Chaos?* In Genesis 1:1 in the beginning did God create *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) the orderly cosmos and unfinished planet earth? Or was there chaos that God transformed into the orderly cosmos in the six days?

(C) *Life Created Once or Twice?* Did God create the stated life kinds once—by the eight command units and the six workdays? Or did He create the stated life kinds twice—once long before the six days and then a second time during the six days?

(D) *Creation of Heavens and Earth in the Beginning or in Day One?* Did God create the heavens and earth “in the beginning,” before day one? Or did He create the earth and heavens *in* day one? In other words, which came first: the creation of the heavens and earth or day one?

I will sort the ten theories plus the eleventh combined theory into groups by these diagnostic questions and seek answers from creation texts. A careful analysis of the eleven theories compared to the creation texts related to each question will eliminate inadequate claims of the theories. At the same time this analysis may affirm certain claims of the theories as accurately reflecting the Biblical texts. Then those claims affirmed by the Biblical texts may be united into a fuller combined theory to guide us closer to what the Bible says that God did.

SUMMARIES OF TEN MAJOR CREATION THEORIES

Before beginning our investigation using the diagnostic questions, we may briefly summarize the ten theories:

(1) *Pre-Creation Chaos Theory*. Before creation in Genesis 1, God and chaos existed. God creatively entered the chaos in Genesis 1:3–31, turning the chaos into orderly cosmos.¹¹⁷ Genesis 1:1 did not declare the *creatio ex nihilo* of the heavens and the earth, allowing but not requiring dualism, coeternal matter and God. Waltke would reject eternal dualism, but he has no explanation for the chaos and calls its preexistence a “mystery.”

(2) *Initial Chaos Theory*. Only God existed before He began to create in Genesis 1:1. In Genesis 1:1–2 God created *ex nihilo* the heavens without sun, moon or stars; and the earth as unformed chaos. In Genesis 1:3–31 God turned this chaos into cosmos in six days. A variant, the young earth creation theory (which will be considered separately because it has additional claims) claims that the days were day-night-cycle days, but others variants may hold the initial chaos theory but claim six long day-age days.

¹¹⁷ Three forms of this theory are based on three of the four grammatical constructions of Genesis 1:1: (1) Genesis 1:1 is a dependent clause temporally subordinate to the main clause of 1:2. “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void” (NRSV). (2) Genesis 1:1 is a dependent clause temporally subordinate to the main clause of 1:3 when God began creating, so 1:2 is a parenthesis of earth’s chaos before God began creating. “When God began to create heaven and earth—the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water—God said, ‘Let there be light’ ” (*Hebrew-English Tanakh*, 2003). (3) Genesis 1:1 is a title or summary of 1:2–31, so the creation began in 1:2 with God creatively entering the preexisting chaotic earth to change it to the orderly earth (Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001], 58). These pre-creation chaos theories are answered by Paul Copan and William Lane Craig in *Creation out of Nothing* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004). Copan and Craig defend the traditional fourth option. (4) Genesis 1:1 is an independent clause of God’s *ex nihilo* creation in the beginning of the heavens and earth, followed by the six days. I find this last construction exegetically compelling.

(3) *Title or Summary Theory*. Genesis 1:1 is not the declaration of God’s initial *ex nihilo* creation of the heavens and earth, but is a title or summary of Genesis 1:2–31. Verse 2 describes the chaos. Then verses 3–31 enumerate the acts summarized by 1:1.¹¹⁸ Waltke’s version of this theory integrates the title or summary theory with the pre-creation chaos theory and the literary framework understanding of the six days.¹¹⁹

(4) *Young Earth Scientific Creationism Theory (with Universal Flood) (YEC)*. All of creation, including Genesis 1:1–2, occurred within the six consecutive days, according to Exodus 20:11. “God created the world, the universe, and everything in them in six ordinary, twenty-four hour days.”¹²⁰ God created “all space (heavens), all time (beginning), and all matter (earth),”¹²¹ and this “*ex nihilo* creation of the universe by God [was] on the first day.”¹²² Then on day four God “placed these ‘lights’ [sun, moon, and galaxies of stars] . . . being made of the same ‘earth’ that had been created on Day One.”¹²³ Since Adam is dated roughly 6,000 years ago,¹²⁴ the universe (including the earth) is a few days older. The flood formed most fossils.

(5) *Theistic Big Bang Theory*. In the beginning God created the big bang, which produced light in the early expanding universe, initiating the first of six eras forming the universe and the earth. “Evening” and “morning” were not day-night-cycle day indicators but meant a progression from disorder toward order in each era. Relativity’s time dilation allows fifteen billion years to be six literal days on God’s “eternal clock.”¹²⁵ Those literal days were *not* day-ages on God’s clock. “Science, through its progressively improved understanding of the world, has come to agree with theology.”¹²⁶

¹¹⁸ All the other theories probably agree that Genesis 1:1 has an introductory quality as well as being the initial creation act, but in this theory the acts of God are in 1:3–31. Genesis 1:1 titles *only* those acts and adds no other act.

¹¹⁹ Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3, Part III: The Initial Chaos Theory and the Precreation Chaos Theory,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:527 (July–Sep. 1975), 216–228; Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 55–78.

¹²⁰ Ken Ham, Andrew Snelling, and Carl Wieland, *The Answers Book* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1990), 89.

¹²¹ Henry M. Morris, *Biblical Creationism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994), 20.

¹²² Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, 19. Morris posits that this “earth” matter throughout the “darkness of space” was “unformed,” so this theory appears to be a special case of the initial chaos theory.

¹²³ Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, 20.

¹²⁴ Some may hold to 4004 BC, but most allow 6,000 to as much as 10,000 years ago.

¹²⁵ Gerald L. Schroeder, *Genesis and the big bang* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990), 49–53.

¹²⁶ Schroeder, *big bang*, 160.

(6) *Old-Earth Day-Age Progressive Creationism Theory (OEC)*. In the beginning God created *ex nihilo* the universe (apparently by the big bang) and planet earth. But earth was uninhabitable and its water-covered surface cloud-darkened. Narrated from the Spirit's perspective just above the water surface, at God's command apparently sunlight penetrated the cloud cover for the first time. This light began day-era one of six long earth ages in which God made planet earth habitable and then progressively created life. The second revelation, the creation, dates the universe at about fifteen billion years old.¹²⁷

(7) *Literary Framework Theory*. The eight commanded creation works form a non-literal and non-sequential literary framework, revealing real historical creation events in thematic rather than chronological order. Although this theory would tend to accommodate long day-ages, it could allow six day-night-cycle days with or without time passage between the days. However, "days" is a secondary concern of Genesis 1, because the chapter is thematic, not chronological, so the "days" are unstated in length and probably not in chronological order. The Genesis 1 framework does not date the universe.¹²⁸

(8) *Creation Revealed in Six Days Theory*. Mesopotamian tablets record family histories, origins, and genealogies. The tablets end in a colophon with the title and author's name. Given the accuracy and universality of the creation data, the only plausible source of Genesis 1:1-2:4a was that God revealed the creation narrative in six days to Adam. A descendent, perhaps Noah, received this oral narrative accurately and recorded it in tablet form, ending in a colophon or *tôlê dôt* of the heavens and the earth. This colophon is the *tôlê dôt* in Genesis 2:4a. The second narrative, from Adam, was also recorded on a tablet ending in the *tôlê dôt* of Adam in 5:1a. Other tablets were added by Noah, Shem, etc. Moses received these tablets (plus probably a papyrus from Joseph) and edited them into the Genesis narratives, each (except the last, which is Egyptian style) ending in a *tôlê dôt*.¹²⁹

(9) *Gap, Reconstitution, Recreation, Ruin-Restoration Theory*. In the beginning God created *ex nihilo* the heavens and the earth. During a long gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, God created life, which flourished, died, and formed fossils. At Lucifer's fall (Isa.

¹²⁷ Hugh Ross, *The Genesis Question* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998).

¹²⁸ Lee Irons and Meredith G. Kline, "The Framework View," in David G. Hagopian, ed., *The Genesis Debate* (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux Press, 2001); Meredith Kline, "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* (1996), 48; Arie Noordtzi, *God's Word and the Testimony of the Ages*.

¹²⁹ P. J. Wiseman, *Creation Revealed in Six Days* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1948).

14:12–15; Ezek. 28:12–17), earth *became* chaos, forming more fossils. Then (leaving the fossils in place) in six day-night-cycle days of restoration, God reconstituted earth and recreated entirely *de novo* life. God commanded light (we may infer sunlight penetrating the cloud layer for the first time after earth’s ruin) to earth’s surface, producing literal day one. On the fourth day God commanded the already-created luminaries to be in the expanse of earth’s sky to separate day and night.¹³⁰ Genealogies date Adam, not the universe.

(10) *Historical Land Creationism Theory*. The Hebrew word “In the beginning” always means a time period. In that beginning time period, God created the heavens and the earth—including earth’s seas and land along with a multiplicity of life—all in Genesis 1:1. The length of the beginning time period is unstated, so this is an undated earth creation theory (UEC). But Eden was an uninhabitable wilderness empty of life. So in six day-night-cycle days in the narrative of 1:2–31, God prepared the Land of Eden (the future Promised Land) making it habitable for the first humans.¹³¹ Thus, the recipients of Genesis, Israel at Mount Sinai, would know who their God is, the Creator of all things; and the importance of the Land as the place to re-establish a covenant relationship according to the Sinai Covenant with their Creator as in Eden/Promised Land.

(11) *Proposed Combined Theory—Two-Stage Biblical Creation (UEC) (2SBC)*. Later I will be proposing a combined eleventh theory based on the most exegetically supported claims of the ten theories. It would be inappropriate to state this theory before the study of the ten theories since I will show how this eleventh theory can be derived from the most Biblical claims of the ten previous theories.

INVESTIGATING THE THEORIES

The ten theories, along with the combined eleventh theory will be investigated by the four diagnostic question pairs. Then the theories’ answers will be evaluated by comparing their claims to the relevant creation texts.

¹³⁰ G. H. Pember, *Earth’s Earliest Ages* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1876; reprinted by Kregel, 1975); Arthur C. Custance, *Without Form and Void* (Brookville, Canada: self-published, 1970); critiqued by Weston W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1976).

¹³¹ John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1996).

Question A addresses the concept of יוֹם (yôm, “day”). This is the crux of Hugh Ross’s day-age theory. He is a prolifically published author, but his works most relevant to the question of the creation of the universe are *The Genesis Question* and *Creation and Time*.¹³³ This same question may be relevant to the unusual claim of “relativistic stretched time” by the theistic big bang theory advocate Gerald Schroeder in *Genesis and the Big Bang*.¹³⁴ He was a scientist from MIT and has progressed in his spiritual journey from atomic energy to the Torah and Talmud. He lives in Israel so he has given us a viewpoint outside the Christian community, often referring to the Talmud, and especially to Nahmanides (Rabbi Moshe ben Nahman Gerondi, also known by the acronym Ramban). Question A is relevant to the literary framework theory of Lee Irons and Meredith Kline, also advocated by Bruce Waltke. Finally, this same question is at the heart of the six revelatory days theory of P. J. Wiseman’s *Creation Revealed in Six Days* and *Clues to the Creation in Genesis*.¹³⁵ Does the Genesis 1 text indicate whether the six days were long day-ages, revelatory days, or day-night cycle days?

Question B addresses chaos. Pre-creation chaos is central to Bruce Waltke’s work. He has combined three of these theories in his major study of creation, published in five successive articles in *Bibliotheca Sacra* and in book form in *Creation and Chaos*.¹³⁶ The three theories are the pre-creation chaos theory, the title or summary theory of Genesis 1:1, and the framework theory of the six days. These three are not necessarily linked, but Waltke has linked them logically. Chaos is also posited by the initial chaos theory which is one of the claims of the young earth scientific creationism theory. Not initial chaos but subsequent chaos is one of the two main claims of the gap theory. The question is not which chaos theory is correct, but was there chaos?

Question C addresses two creations of life. It especially relates to two theories. A major theory in the first half of the twentieth century was the gap, or ruin-restoration, theory.

¹³³ Hugh Ross, *The Genesis Question* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998); *Creation and Time* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994)

¹³⁴ Schroeder, big bang.

¹³⁵ P. J. Wiseman *Creation Revealed in Six Days* (London: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1948); *Clues to Creation in Genesis* (London: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1977).

¹³⁶ Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3, Parts I–V, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 1975–1976; *Creation and Chaos* (Portland, OR: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary).

The most recent proponent is Arthur C. Custance in *Without Form and Void*,¹³⁷ and before him an outstanding explanation of the theory by George H. Pember in *Earth's Earliest Ages*.¹³⁸

The gap theory postulates two creations of life. John Sailhamer has demonstrated that the gap theory is grammatically implausible. However, he, too, postulates either two creations of life or an ancient creation of life and an introduction of life into Eden in his historical land theory in *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, in "Genesis" in *the Expositor's Bible Commentary*, and especially in *Genesis Unbound*.¹³⁹ Sailhamer's form of the two creations of life is sounder grammatically. But question C asks if there were two creations of life.

Finally, question D addresses whether God created *ex nihilo* the heavens and the earth in the beginning before day one or during day one. The young earth scientific creationism or 6,000-year-old-universe theory uniquely among the theories posits the novel claim that the *ex nihilo* creation occurred during day one based on their reading in English of Exodus 20:11. This theory also posits initial chaos. Its most prominent advocate is Henry Morris, who has produced a detailed theory with an unusually large number of claims, many of them clearly sound. The question is whether the Hebrew text backs the foundational claim based on the English reading of Exodus 20:11. I will be investigating Henry Morris' works, particularly *The Genesis Record*, *Biblical Creationism*, and *The Remarkable Record of Job*.¹⁴⁰ Numerous other authors explicate this view in books and in the quarterly publications *CRSQ* of the Creation Research Society (CRS) and *Technical Journal of Answers in Genesis* (AiG). Because of the large number of authors with somewhat diverse views publishing in these journals, I have chosen to limit my research on this view primarily to Henry Morris, who with John Whitcomb wrote *The Genesis Flood*, which to a large degree launched this movement. But did God create the heavens and earth in day one as the above movement claims or did God create the heavens and earth in the beginning?

¹³⁷ Arthur C. Custance, *Without form and Void: A Study of the Meaning of Genesis 1:2* (Brookville, Canada: Doorway Papers, 1970).

¹³⁸ G. H. Pember, *Earth's Earliest Ages* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1975).

¹³⁹ John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); "Genesis" in *the Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990); *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 1996).

¹⁴⁰ Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976); *Biblical Creationism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993); *The Remarkable Record of Job* (Santee, CA: Master Books).

Because of the limits of this study, I have chosen to emphasize the primary author of each view: Hugh Ross, Bruce Waltke (several views), George Pember, John Sailhamer, Henry Morris, P. J. Wiseman, Meredith Kline, and Gerald Schroeder.

I wish to make it clear that in critiquing these authors' writings, I do not intend any personal aspersions on the authors. I have met and discussed creation with many of them and heard lectures by or studied under others, specifically Henry Morris, John Whitcomb, Hugh Ross, Ken Ham, Duane Gish, Carl Wieland, John Sailhamer, Bruce Waltke, William Demski, William Lane Craig, Paul Copan, and others, and I consider them honorable Christian men. But we all make mistakes, and part of entering the public forum is entering the critiques of others in the corporate hermeneutical spiral. Thus I intend my critique to be gracious even when pointing out problematic aspects of the ten theories. I found that every one of these theories has contributed valuable insights into what the Bible says God did when He created the heavens and the earth.

Finally, in the eleventh theory that I am formulating, I recognize that I am standing on the shoulders of these giants in creation theory who have preceded me. Perhaps I may add a little to their great work.

CHAPTER 5

THE CLAIMS OF EACH OF THE TEN THEORIES

Each of the ten theories has a set of claims. Before evaluating the claims by the four sets of diagnostic questions, I will list and evaluate the claims of each theory.

1. PRE-CREATION CHAOS THEORY

Dr. Bruce Waltke is an eminent Hebrew scholar who has contributed so much to our understanding of Genesis. With all the helpful insights he has given us, I believe he made one small logical error. In pointing out that small error I am not attacking him personally and I certainly do not claim to be even remotely his equal in Hebrew. I have greatly benefited from his work, but we all can make small mistakes.

Bruce Waltke has combined three of the theories. Other authors may hold each of these theories separately, but Waltke represents all three and has communicated two of them especially thoroughly, so I have chosen him as their representative. The modern chaos view goes back to Hermann Gunkel's work, *Schöpfung und Chaos*,¹⁴¹ propounding that Israel's cosmogonic myth was related to other ANE cosmogonic myths, such as the *Enuma Elish*, with its creation out of chaos. However, according to Gunkel, in the Hebrew version of the creation myth Yahweh replaced the other creator gods. To Gunkel *die Schöpfungsgeschichte* in Genesis formed a theologically improved monotheistic version of ANE chaos myths but without needing *die geschichtlichkeit*. His concept of myth may have gone back to Gianbattista Vico's (1668–1744) pejorative critical view of myth¹⁴² as “the spontaneous production of poetic fancy, awakened in primitive man by the imposing and terrifying spectacles of Nature.”¹⁴³ Since chaos was a common theme in ANE myths, Gunkel seems to have presupposed chaos in what he saw as the Biblical version of cosmogonic myth. A contemporary and much more evangelical exponent of the pre-creation chaos theory, Hebrew scholar, Bruce Waltke, makes the following claims

¹⁴¹ Waltke refers to Gunkel at the very beginning of his first article on creation. Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3, Part I *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:525 (Jan. 1975), 7; Hermann Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos* (Göttingen: Vanenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1921).

¹⁴² This idea of fictitious myth was scathingly denounced in the sixth century B.C. by Xenophon, and rightly so. Xenophon declared that Hesiod and Homer were creating fictions unworthy of deity.

¹⁴³ W. Taylor Stevenson, *History as Myth: The Import for Contemporary Theology* (New York: Seabury, 1969).

in his pre-creation chaos theory (note: presuppositions or preunderstandings will be numbered with zeros):

PREUNDERSTANDINGS OF THE PRE-CREATION CHAOS THEORY

(00) *Presuppositionally, logic prevails.* Methodologically Bruce Waltke presuppositionally assumes the fundamentals of logic. His key sentence is, “Logic will not allow us to entertain the contradictory notions: God created the organized heavens and earth; the earth was unorganized.”¹⁴⁴

(0) *Chaos preexisted.* The above quote may include a second preunderstanding. One may wonder if he approaches his exegesis with a pre-understanding or at least predisposition toward pre-creation chaos from his vast studies of ANE chaos myths. Then he concludes his exegesis with pre-creation chaos.

CLAIMS OF THE PRE-CREATION CHAOS THEORY

(1) “*The Heavens and the earth*” in *Genesis 1:1* is a merism and means the entire orderly universe, the cosmos. Most Bible scholars agree with this claim that “the heavens and the earth” is a merism meaning the entire organized universe, the cosmos. Other than recognizing that earth was unfinished, there is no need to dispute this well-established claim.¹⁴⁵

(2) *Tōhû v^ābōhû* in *Genesis 1:2* means chaos, and describes the entire universe. Waltke claims that תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû), clarified by ANE chaos myth, means chaos, a pre-creation chaos that was “unorganized,”¹⁴⁶ “uncreated or unformed,”¹⁴⁷ “a state of material prior to its creation,” “a state of material devoid of order, or without being shaped or formed into something.”¹⁴⁸ Waltke claims that the all-pervasive chaos was a pre-creation chaos, that is, a chaos that existed before *Genesis 1:1*.

¹⁴⁴ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 219, quoting Plessis, *Supplément*, 716.

¹⁴⁵ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Genesis, 1-15* (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 13; Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 105-106; John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992),

¹⁴⁶ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3,” Part II, 121.

¹⁴⁷ Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3, Part IV” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:528 (Oct. 1975), 338.

¹⁴⁸ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3,” Part II, 142-143.

(3) *All was chaos, but a good God could not have created chaos.* Logically, the “God of order and goodness” did not create “disorder” of “unformed” earth, the deep, and darkness. “A good God characterized by light could not, in consistency with His nature, create evil, disorder, and darkness.”¹⁴⁹

No mention is made anywhere in Scripture that God called the unformed, dark, and watery state of verse 3 into existence The deep and darkness in verse 2 are less than desirable and were not called into existence by the God of order and goodness. It is concluded, therefore, that though it is possible to take verse 2 as a circumstantial clause on syntactical grounds, it is impossible to do so on philological grounds, and that it seems unlikely it should be so construed on theological grounds, for it makes God the Creator of disorder, darkness, and deep, a situation not tolerated in the perfect cosmos and never said to have been called into existence by the Word of God.¹⁵⁰

What Waltke means by “it is possible to take verse 2 as a circumstantial clause on syntactical grounds” is Genesis 1:2 appears to describe the unfinished circumstances of the earth after its creation in 1:1. The classic Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar sees “verse 2 as a circumstantial clause with verse 1.”¹⁵¹ “Impossible,” Waltke responds, because order in 1:1 contradicts disorder in 1:2. Besides that, God could not create “disorder, darkness, or the deep.”

(3a) *The initial chaos theory—God created cosmos during 1:1; it was chaos—is illogical.* Order in Genesis 1:1 contradicts the description of the situation given in Genesis 1:2 of the creation being chaos. “Logic will not allow us to entertain the contradictory notions: God created the organized heavens and earth; the earth was unorganized.”¹⁵² It is also “impossible” philologically.

Therefore, the initial chaos theory that God created unformed chaos *during* Genesis 1:1 is illogical.

(3b) *The gap theory of chaos produced after 1:1 is syntactically and theologically improbable and philologically “impossible.”* Bruce Waltke is an eminent Hebrew scholar and author of the massive *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. He declares that Genesis 1:2 should not be translated “Now the earth became *tohu vbohu*.” Thus, the gap theory is ruled out. The earth did not become chaos *after* Genesis 1:1.

¹⁴⁹ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3,” Part IV, 339.

¹⁵⁰ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 221.

¹⁵¹ Waltke referring to E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 455 (142c).

¹⁵² Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 219, quoting Plessis, *Supplément*, 716.

(4) *Because tōhû v^ābōhû means chaos and God would not create chaos, chaos preexisted before creation.* Waltke says, “Logic will not allow us to entertain the contradictory notions: God created the organized heavens and earth; the earth was unorganized.”¹⁵³ Logic eliminates the initial chaos theory that God created chaos *during* 1:1. Grammar disproves the gap theory that earth “became” chaos *after* 1:1. So “the chaos of verse 2 existed before the creation,”¹⁵⁴ as pre-creation chaos.

(4a) *Chaos preexisted before creation.* Waltke claims that since תִּהְיֶה חֹסֶם וְיָבֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה תִּהְיֶה *tōhû v^ābōhû* means chaos and so all was chaos, and that chaos was not created *during* nor resulting from events *after* Genesis 1:1, then logically the chaos must have occurred *before* Genesis 1:1. He identifies his own theory as “the precreation chaos theory of cosmogony, which holds that the chaos of verse 2 existed *before* the creation mentioned in the Bible.”¹⁵⁵ He means that chaos preexisted before the creative events described in Genesis 1:3-31. The תִּהְיֶה חֹסֶם וְיָבֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה תִּהְיֶה (*tōhû v^ābōhû*) state was chaos, and this state was the “state of material prior to its creation.”¹⁵⁶ By “creation” he means the six days of Genesis 1:3-31 transforming the chaos described in 1:2 into order. He is declaring that the chaos “state of material” existed prior to Genesis 1 and is calling “the creation” the undoing of chaos in 1:3-31. Creation was not an *ex nihilo* creation in Genesis 1:1, for there was no event in Genesis 1:1. So both God and chaos predated Genesis 1. Several major problems result from this proposed solution to his supposed logical dilemma.

(4b) *The preexisting darkness, chaos, and sea were not from God.* God could not have created the primordial deep ocean and darkness on its surface because “a good God characterized by light could not, in consistency with His nature, create evil, disorder, and darkness.”¹⁵⁷ So God did not create the chaos, deep water, or darkness.

(4c) *The source of the chaos is unknown.* “But what about the uncreated or unformed state, the darkness and the deep of Genesis 1:2? Here a great mystery is encountered, for the Bible never says that God brought these into existence by His word.”¹⁵⁸ The source of the

¹⁵³ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 219, quoting Plessis, *Supplément*, 716.

¹⁵⁴ Waltke, *Chaos*, 19.

¹⁵⁵ Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3, Part II: The Restitution Theory,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:526 (April–June 1975), 136.

¹⁵⁶ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis 1:1–3, Part II*, 142.

¹⁵⁷ Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3, Part IV: The Theology of Genesis 1” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:528 (Oct.-Dec. 1975), 339.

¹⁵⁸ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis 1:1–3, Part IV*, 338.

uncreated chaos, darkness, and deep is unknown. Chaos is contrary to the nature of God. “The Book of Genesis does not inform us concerning the origin of that which is contrary to the nature of God,” but instead “mocks us” providing “no information.”¹⁵⁹

(4d) *God triumphed over anti-creation chaos, which is symbolized as a sea monster.* Bruce Waltke sees both elements of continuity and discontinuity between Genesis 1 and creation myths, particularly the *Enuma Elish*.¹⁶⁰ He explains, “Yahweh’s poets used the symbol of Rahab to depict His triumph [over chaos] at creation in the prehistoric past.”¹⁶¹ The Sumerian *Ninurta* myth, Indian *Vedas*, and Akkadian *Enūma Elish* have a “repressive” “anti-creation dragon monster,” vanquished by a god who made order.¹⁶² Waltke claims, “With this background, it is now certain that Rahab or Leviathan [in the Bible] is an anti-creation dragon monster for the biblical texts imply the same three or four features found in these other mythical cosmogonies.”¹⁶³ “The Rahab-Leviathan emblem is . . . the figure to describe God’s creative activity in the pre-historic past” as “Yahweh’s victory” over chaos “prior to creation.”¹⁶⁴ By His triumph God was “assuring man that it [the chaos] was under the dominion of the Spirit of God.”¹⁶⁵

(5) *Because chaos preexisted, there was no ex nihilo creation in Genesis 1:1.* “The heavens and the earth” is a merism meaning the entire organized universe. Since תִּהְיוּ וְיִבְרָא (tōhû v^ābōhû) in 1:2 means “disordered” “chaos,” then Genesis 1:1 could not have included the creation of the organized universe, the cosmos. So according to the pre-creation chaos theory, there was no *ex nihilo* creation in Genesis 1:1.

(6) *“Creation” meant solely the transformation of chaos in Genesis 1:3-31.* By “creation” Waltke does not mean an initial *ex nihilo* creation, because he does not believe in an *ex nihilo* creation in Genesis 1:1. Instead, to him, the “creation” meant the six days transforming the chaos into an orderly cosmos. “The state of material prior to its creation” was “‘nothing’ . . . in the sense that an orderly arrangement, a creation, a cosmos, has not as

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Waltke, “Creation, Part IV”, 328-334.

¹⁶¹ Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3, Part I: Introduction to Biblical Cosmogony,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:525 (Jan.–March 1975), 36.

¹⁶² Waltke, “Creation, Part I,” 33.

¹⁶³ Waltke, *Chaos*, 10.

¹⁶⁴ Waltke, *Chaos*, 15.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

yet taken place.”¹⁶⁶ The phrase “state of material prior to its creation”¹⁶⁷ makes sense only as we use Waltke’s definition of “creation” as transformation of the chaos into orderly cosmos during the six literary units. Bruce Waltke favors the literary framework theory of six literary units, the framework understanding of the six “days.” During the six literary units, God made the great changes that transformed the chaos into the orderly cosmos and an inhabited world. “God steps creatively into the primordial abyss and darkness to transform it into a magnificent, ordered, balanced universe.”¹⁶⁸

Waltke posits that chaos was the state of material that preexisted before Genesis 1, that there was no initial *ex nihilo* creation stated in the Bible, and that “created” in Genesis 1:1 means the acts of God during six-part framework transforming the preexisting chaos.

PROBLEMATIC CLAIMS OF THE PRE-CREATION CHAOS THEORY

(2) *Tōhû v^ābōhû in Genesis 1:2 means chaos, and describes the entire universe.*

Waltke claims that תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû), clarified by ANE chaos myth, means chaos, a pre-creation chaos that was “uncreated or unformed.”¹⁶⁹ He claims that תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) applies to everything so the entirety was chaos.

However, Waltke assumes that תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) means chaos. He ignores the obvious escape to his proposed dilemma, that there was no chaos because Genesis 1:2 means that earth was in an unfinished condition, still “uninhabitable and uninhabited,” not “chaos.”

Also I would respond that earth, not the universe, is the subject of Genesis 1:2: “And the earth was tōhû v^ābōhû.” Earth, not the universe, was not yet finished. Finishing earth would be the work of the six days.

(3) *All was chaos, but a good God could not have created chaos.* Waltke claims that logically the “God of order and goodness” did not create “disorder” of “unformed” earth, the deep, and darkness. “A good God characterized by light could not, in consistency with His nature, create evil, disorder, and darkness.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis 1:1–3, Part II*, 142.

¹⁶⁷ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis 1:1–3, Part II*, 142.

¹⁶⁸ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis, A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 55.

¹⁶⁹ Bruce K. Waltke, “Creation, Part IV,” 338.

¹⁷⁰ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3,” Part IV, 339.

But if תְּהוֹמָוֶת (tōhû v^ābōhû) does not mean chaos, then God could have created the orderly heavens and (unfinished) earth just as Genesis 1:1 says. The problem in Waltke’s analysis is the assumption that תְּהוֹמָוֶת תְּהוֹמָוֶת (tōhû v^ābōhû) in Genesis 1:2 means chaos, which Isaiah 34:11 and Jeremiah 4:23, using both terms, show is not the meaning at all. These two verses speak of the land after conquest, that the land was uninhabitable and uninhabited. So God did not create chaos. He created the orderly heavens and unfinished earth.

(4) *Because tōhû v^ābōhû means chaos and God would not create chaos, chaos preexisted before creation.* Waltke claims, “Logic will not allow us to entertain the contradictory notions: God created the organized heavens and earth; the earth was unorganized.”¹⁷¹ Logic eliminates the initial chaos theory, and syntax, theology, and philology eliminate the gap theory, leaving Waltke’s pre-creation chaos theory.

However, Waltke’s claim evaporates if tōhû v^ābōhû does not mean chaos.

(4a) *Chaos preexisted before creation.*

Waltke’s claim has no explicit Scriptural backing.

(4b) *The preexisting darkness, chaos, and sea were not from God.* Waltke claims, “A good God characterized by light could not, in consistency with His nature, create evil, disorder, and darkness,”¹⁷² so God could not have created darkness or the deep sea.

However, Job 39:9 says God made darkness on earth. Isaiah 45:7 says, “I form the light, and create darkness” (KJV). Revelation 10:6 says God created the sea, “Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it.”

(4c) *The source of the chaos is unknown.* “But what about the uncreated or unformed state, the darkness and the deep of Genesis 1:2? Here a great mystery is encountered, for the Bible never says that God brought these into existence by His word.”¹⁷³ “The Book of Genesis does not inform us concerning the origin of that which is contrary to the nature of God,” but instead “mocks us,” providing “no information.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 219, quoting Plessis, *Supplément*, 716.

¹⁷² Bruce K. Waltke, “Creation, Part IV,” 339.

¹⁷³ Bruce K. Waltke, Genesis 1:1–3, Part IV, 338.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

However, the Bible does not mock us about the origin of the universe. Genesis 1:1 tells us “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Waltke also claims, “The Bible never says that God brought these into existence by His word.”¹⁷⁵

But John 1:3 tells us “All things were made by him [the Word]; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (KJV). Hebrews 1:2 speaks of “*his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (KJV).

(5) *Because chaos preexisted, there was no ex nihilo creation in Genesis 1:1 and “creation” meant solely the transformation of chaos in Genesis 1:3-31.*

Waltke failed to prove that תְּהוֹמֹת (tōhû v^ābōhû) even means chaos, much less that chaos preexisted, so his dependent claim that the *ex nihilo* creation did not occur in Genesis 1:1 is invalid.

PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF THE PRE-CREATION CHAOS THEORY

(0) *Presuppositionally, logic prevails.* Bruce Waltke claims, “Logic will not allow us to entertain the contradictory notions: God created the organized heavens and earth; the earth was unorganized.”¹⁷⁶

I agree that logic is built into the way God made the universe work. However, our ability in logic may not invalidate an explicit Scripture text lest we be found indulging in faulty logic. Waltke’s logic is not faulty. His presupposition of chaos is his error.

LARGELY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF PRE-CREATION CHAOS THEORY

(1) *“The heavens and the earth” in Genesis 1:1 is a merism and means the entire orderly universe, the cosmos.*

The heavens and the earth” is a merism widely recognized as the entire organized universe, the cosmos.¹⁷⁷ “In fact, Wisdom of Solomon uses the Greek words κόσμος to

¹⁷⁵ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis 1:1–3, Part IV*, 338.

¹⁷⁶ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 219, quoting Plessis, *Supplément*, 716.

¹⁷⁷ Bruce Waltke, *Genesis, A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 59; Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 218-221.

refer to Genesis 1:1.”¹⁷⁸ Major Bible commentators agree that “the heavens and the earth” is a merism for the entire organized universe,¹⁷⁹ “an expression of totality.”¹⁸⁰ Cassuto adds that “the ancient Hebrews conceived God alone as a unity.” So the Hebrews saw the heavens as God’s realm and the earth as “given to the sons of men.” Since “earth is to be understood here [as] everything under the heavens including the sea,” together the two terms—“the heavens and the earth”—constituted everything created.¹⁸¹ Thus, “the heavens and the earth” constituted the entire created universe, the cosmos. I agree that Bruce Waltke has successfully demonstrated this claim.

(3a) *The initial chaos theory—God created the cosmos; it was chaos—is illogical.*

Order in Genesis 1:1 contradicts chaos in Genesis 1:2. “Logic will not allow us to entertain the contradictory notions: God created the organized heavens and earth; the earth was unorganized.”¹⁸² The initial chaos theory is also “impossible” philologically.

We agree that the initial chaos theory—that God created “the heavens and the earth,” meaning the cosmos but the cosmos was chaos—is wrong.

(3b) *The gap theory of chaos produced after 1:1 is syntactically improbable and philologically “impossible.”*

I might not quite use the word “impossible” describing the gap theory, but almost. Most modern authors would agree with Waltke that Genesis 1:2 should not be translated “Now the earth became *tohu vbohu*,” as claimed by gap theory adherents. I am not the Hebrew scholar that Bruce Waltke is, but I agree that the Hebrew does not support the middle stage of the gap theory grammatically—the gap—making it close to impossible to consider the gap theory viable.

Moreover, if תֹהוּ וּבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) does not mean “chaos,” the gap theory is wrong. In that case, earth was not chaos before, during, or after Genesis 1:1.

¹⁷⁸ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 218; referring to U Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. Israel Abrahams, 2 vol. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 1:22.

¹⁷⁹ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Genesis, 1-15* (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 13; Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 105-106.

¹⁸⁰ John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 84.

¹⁸¹ U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998), 20.

¹⁸² Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 219, quoting Plessis, *Supplément*, 716.

Waltke assumes that because the initial chaos theory is logically improbable and the gap theory philologically impossible, his precreation chaos theory must be the only remaining option. But he has overlooked one option—that chaos never existed.

SUMMARY OF THE PRE-CREATION CHAOS THEORY

“The heavens and the earth” meant the entire orderly universe, the cosmos. Waltke claims that תְּהוֹמָוֹת (tōhû v^ābōhû) in Genesis 1:2 means “chaos,” and described the universe (even though Genesis 1: 2 identifies earth, not the universe, as תְּהוֹמָוֹת תְּהוֹמָוֹת (tōhû v^ābōhû). So he claims that the entire universe was chaos. Since the initial chaos theory—claiming that God created cosmos *during* Genesis 1:1, but it was chaos in 1:2—is illogical, and since the gap theory—claiming that earth became chaos *after* the creation, between 1:1 and 1:2—is grammatically improbably and philologically impossible, then chaos must have preexisted with God *before* Genesis 1:1 as pre-creation chaos. Therefore, Waltke concludes that there was no *ex nihilo* creation of the heavens and the earth in the beginning in Genesis 1:1.

2. INITIAL CHAOS THEORY

Advocates of the initial chaos theory have contributed immensely to our understanding of creation. But it is that one seemingly small problem of the assumption of chaos that has been problematic in their position.

Their belief is that God created chaos in Genesis 1:1. Then He transformed the chaos into the organized universe in six days, whether the days are understood as normal day-night cycle days or day-age eras.

Mark Rooker summarizes the view, “Proponents of the initial chaos theory maintain that Genesis 1:1 refers to the original creation, with verse 2 providing a description of this original creation mentioned in verse 1 by the use of three disjunctive clauses.”¹⁸³ This view proposes that these clauses indicate that the “original creation” in 1:1 was chaos—“formless and void.” Finally, God transformed the chaos in six “days.”

¹⁸³ Mark Rooker, “Genesis 1:1-3: Creation of Recreation,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149:596 July 1992, 318

This theory may be part of other theories, but this initial chaos theory itself has three main claims plus a refutation of the gap theory.

PREUNDERSTANDING OF THE INITIAL CHAOS THEORY

(0) *Chaos is assumed.* The initial chaos theory seems to have a predilection toward or even an assumption of initial chaos, as if there were no alternative.

CLAIMS OF THE INITIAL CHAOS THEORY

(1) *In the beginning God created unformed chaotic matter.* In Genesis 1:1 God created *ex nihilo*, not the formed heavens and the earth, but unformed chaotic matter. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth [space and matter], and the matter so created was at first unformed and uninhabited.”¹⁸⁴ God created this chaotic matter, not before or after but *during* Genesis 1:1 as the initial creation. The *ex nihilo* creation was the creation of chaotic matter along with space and time in the beginning as the event of Genesis 1:1.

(2) *The entire universe was chaos.* This view is based on understanding the phrase תִּבְהוּ וְרֵיָאֵל (tōhû v^ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) as describing the condition of the entire universe. The entire universe was unformed chaotic matter, and that chaotic matter was what God had created in the beginning.

(3) *God transformed the chaotic matter into the organized cosmos in the six days.* Variations of this initial chaos theory may view the six days differently, whether literal day-night-cycle days or long day-eras. The literal day-night-cycle advocates tend to include initial creation of chaotic matter within day one. But all variations of the initial chaos theory agree that the initial chaos of the entire universe was transformed in the six days.

(4) *The gap or ruin-restoration theory is incorrect.* The initial chaos theory does not interact much with Waltke’s pre-creation chaos theory, I presume because the initial chaos theory advocates see Waltke’s theory as so problematic as to be minimally threatening. However, probably the majority of fundamentalists of the first half of the twentieth century did espouse the gap theory, so the gap theory was a direct competitor to the initial chaos theory and its offshoot, the young earth creation theory. Therefore, advocates of the initial chaos theory have frequently, thoroughly, and very successfully demonstrated the inadequacy

¹⁸⁴ Henry Morris, *Genesis Record*, 50.

of the gap theory.¹⁸⁵ Independent critics agree that the gap theory is wrong.¹⁸⁶

Three theories believe תְּהוֹמֹת וְרֵקִיעַ (tōhû v^ābōhû) means chaos or unformed matter—the initial chaos theory, the pre-creation theory, and the gap theory. We may clarify these three theories by when the chaos was formed. The initial chaos theory claims that the unformed matter was created *during* Genesis 1:1. In the pre-creation chaos theory, Waltke claims that this chaos preexisted *before* Genesis 1:1. Gap theory advocates claim that only earth was the object of chaos and earth became chaos *after* Genesis 1:1 in a gap of time at Genesis 1:2.

PROBLEMATIC CLAIMS IN THE INITIAL CHAOS THEORY

(0) *Chaos is assumed.* The initial chaos theory seems to assume initial chaos.

Unger responds:

But the first interpretation [“original chaotic state”] is contradicted by both Scripture and theology. Why should a perfect Creator create an original imperfect and chaotic earth?—the fact of which is expressly denied by revealed truth recorded in Isaiah 45:18 and completely at variance with the ecstatically joyous dedication of the primeval earth when it came forth perfect from the Creator’s hand, as described by Job (Job 38:4–7).¹⁸⁷

An alternative to chaos will be discussed later—creation of orderly heavens and an unfinished planet earth.

(1) *In the beginning God created unformed chaotic matter.* The initial chaos theory redefines “the heavens and the earth” as chaotic matter.

However, Nehemiah 9:6 speaks of both the heavens and the celestial heaven as having an orderly array like a host of soldiers: “You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host.” A host was an orderly army of soldiers in array, not chaos. When God created the heavens, they were created in orderly array.

(2) *The entire universe was chaos.* The initial chaos theory applies the phrase תְּהוֹמֹת וְרֵקִיעַ (tōhû v^ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) to the universe rather than to earth.

¹⁸⁵ Mark F. Rooker, “Genesis 1:1-3—Creation or Re-Creation?” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149:594-595.

¹⁸⁶ Weston Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled, A Critique of the Gap Theory* (Collinsville, IL: Burgener Enterprises, 1994).

¹⁸⁷ Merrill Unger, “Rethinking the Genesis Account of Creation” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 115:457 (Jan. 1958), 27.

Cassuto rightly responds, “The construction וְהָאֲרֶצַּח הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאֲרֶצַּח הַיָּבֵשׁ הַזֶּה וְהָאֲרֶצַּח הַיָּבֵשׁ הַזֶּה וְהָאֲרֶצַּח הַיָּבֵשׁ הַזֶּה proves . . . that v. 2 begins a new subject.”¹⁸⁸ That new subject is “and the earth,” meaning that solid body on which Moses was upon, in contrast to the merism, “the heavens and the earth,” which indicates the universe. Genesis 1:2 very clearly specifies that earth, not the heavens and earth, was וְהָאֲרֶצַּח הַיָּבֵשׁ הַזֶּה (tōhû v^ābōhû).

The more consistent exponents of this theory realize this problem, so they posit that the heavens was space and the earth was all the matter (unformed) throughout the universe. Thus they can agree that only “earth” was chaos. Then on day four the entire universe was made from earth, because earth was the chaotic matter that was throughout the universe.

However, this understanding of “earth” is very problematic for a number of reasons. The text of the fourth day says nothing about the sun, moon, and stars being made of earth. Today we know that “the stars” consist of several hundred billion galaxies each of several hundred billion suns. These suns average a million times the volume of planet earth. Nowhere in the lexicography or in other usage in the Bible does the term אֲרֶצַח (ha'āretz; the earth, the land) signify the matter of the entire universe. Moreover, the universe is over 99 percent hydrogen and helium. Hydrogen and helium gases do not constitute “earth.” This use of the word אֲרֶצַח (ha'āretz) to mean the hydrogen and helium of the billions of galaxies could hardly have been within the meanings that Moses could have intended for אֲרֶצַח (ha'āretz). Moses specified “the heavens from the earth” in the previous verse, 1:1, and again in Genesis 2:1 forming an *inclusio*. In Genesis 2:1 the heavens consisted of the sun, moon and stars in the sky above and the earth on which were all the plants and animals and Adam. In such an *inclusio* with identical terms at the beginning and at the end, the terms must have at least roughly the same meaning. So the heavens in both 1:1 and in 2:1 must have been the sun, moon, and stars in the sky in which they resided. The earth must have been the planet described in 1:2 as unfinished, but in finished condition by 2:1. Also, how could Moses have meant the modern term “space” by the term “heavens,” and “universe of unformed chaotic matter” by “earth”? Space and chaotic unformed matter in space were beyond what Moses could have meant. Space and unformed matter seem imported into the ancient text as a conceptual anachronism.

¹⁸⁸ Cassuto, *Genesis*, 20.

According to the initial chaos theory the phrase תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) means chaos, making Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 contradictory—God created the orderly cosmos; it was chaos.

The contradiction disappears if, contra the initial chaos theory, we recognize that God created the orderly cosmos in the beginning.

PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIM OF THE INITIAL CHAOS THEORY

(3) *God transformed the chaotic matter into the organized cosmos in the six days.*

Since the universe is seen as chaotic by this theory, God not only transformed earth in the six days but created the universe of galaxies of stars (out of chaotic “earth,” or *ex nihilo*) on the fourth day.

The six days of work seems well substantiated by the text. The problematic aspect is the chaotic unformed matter and the *creation* of the galaxies on the fourth day.

SUBSTANTIATED CLAIM OF THE INITIAL CHAOS THEORY

(4) *The gap or ruin-restoration theory is incorrect.*

Genesis 1:2 begins with a vav disjunctive indicating a description of the situation resulting from Genesis 1:1. Genesis 1:1 was not an action or event. The gap theory claims that Genesis 1:2 says “And earth became *tohu vbohû*,” an action. The gap theory’s claim is grammatically incorrect. I agree.

SUMMARY OF THE INITIAL CHAOS THEORY

The initial chaos theory claims that תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) in Genesis 1:2 describes the universe (rather than earth as 1:2 actually says), so in the beginning God created unformed chaotic matter. God transformed this initial chaotic matter into the organized cosmos in the six days (whether normal day-night days as in the young earth creation version, or in day-ages). On the fourth day, God made the organized universe from the chaotic matter in space or possibly created the universe in a second *ex nihilo* act.

3. TITLE OR SUMMARY THEORY

The title theory is advocated most ably by Bruce Waltke. His version of the title theory is connected to his pre-creation chaos theory. However, the connection is not necessary. Don Batten of the young earth creation camp also seems to hold the title theory. Batten states, “Since Genesis 1:1 says God created everything, we see that it summarizes the whole creation process, the rest of the chapter providing the details. In other words, Genesis 1:1 does not describe a primal creation in the distant past, but the whole creation in six days.” “Genesis 1:1 is the summary of the whole creation process.”¹⁸⁹ Waltke’s version consists of the following series of logical claims:

PREVIOUS CLAIMS OF THE TITLE OR SUMMARY THEORY

Waltke’s version of the title or summary theory is built on his first six claims of his pre-creation chaos theory

- (1) *“The heavens and the earth” means the entire orderly universe, the cosmos.*
- (2) *Tōhû v^abōhû in Genesis 1:2 means chaos and describes the whole universe.*
- (3) *All was chaos, but a good God could not have created chaos.*
 - (3a) *Initial chaos—God created cosmos; it was chaos during 1:1-2—is illogical.*
 - (3b) *The gap theory of chaos produced after 1:1 is philologically impossible.*
- (4) *God would not have created chaos, so chaos preexisted before creation.*
- (5) *Because chaos preexisted, Genesis 1:1 could not have been ex nihilo creation.*
- (6) *“Creation” was the transformation in Genesis 1:3-31 of the preexisting chaos.*

THREE ADDITIONAL CLAIMS OF THE TITLE OR SUMMARY THEORY

(7) *“In the beginning God created . . .” not “When God began to create”* Genesis 1:1 is an independent clause, and ַּיְהִי אֵרֶץ וַיְהִי חָשָׁךְ (*b^erē’shît*, in the beginning) is in the absolute form. So 1:1 should be translated in the traditional way as “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Waltke states, “All ancient versions (LXX, Vulgate, Aquila, Theodotion, Symmachus, Targum Onkelos) constructed the form as absolute and verse 1 as an independent clause.”¹⁹⁰ Waltke concludes, “Moses could not have used any other

¹⁸⁹ Don Batten, “Soft Gap Sophistry,” *Creation* 26:3 (June 2004), 44-47. Henry Morris disagrees. Morris states, “Neither can verse 1 as a whole be considered a title or summary of the events described in the succeeding verses of the chapter.” Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 42.

¹⁹⁰ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 223.

construction to denote the first word as in the absolute state, but he could have opted for a different construction to indicate clearly the construct state.”¹⁹¹ This understanding of Genesis 1:1 as an independent declaration allows Genesis 1:1 to be either an *independent title* as in Waltke’s title theory; or allows the traditional understanding that Genesis 1:1 is an *independent declaration* of the *ex nihilo* creation by God of the heavens and the earth in the beginning. Waltke’s correct analysis that Genesis 1:1 is an independent clause rules out 1:1 being a dependent clause such as, “When God began to create”

(8) *Logically, God could not create unorganized chaos, so 1:1 must be something other than ex nihilo creation.* The “God of order and goodness” could not have created the “disorder” of “unformed” earth, the primordial deep ocean, and darkness on the surface of that primordial ocean. “A good God characterized by light could not, in consistency with His nature, create evil, disorder, and darkness.”¹⁹² So God did not create chaos during Genesis 1:1; yet according to Waltke, 1:2 declares chaos (which Waltke applies to the universe rather than just to earth). Logic does not allow, “God created cosmos; it was chaos.” One of the two halves of the sentence must be false. Waltke disallows the first half. He claims that God did not create in Genesis 1:1. Instead, Waltke propose that Genesis 1:1 is just a title, empty of any act. Waltke never considers if the second half of the sentence, “it was chaos,” might be incorrect. But what if there was no chaos?

(9) *Since Genesis 1:1 cannot be the creation of chaos, it is only a title.* Waltke claims chaos existed before Genesis 1:1, and if that is so, then God could not have created that chaos in Genesis 1:1. He claims there was no *ex nihilo* creation in 1:1. So Genesis 1:1 must be a title or summary statement of 1:2–31. Genesis 1:2 is the state of earth from before creation, then Genesis 1:3-31 is the creation work in which God transformed the unorganized pre-creation chaos into orderly cosmos. Waltke calls his theory “The View that Verse 1 Is a Summary Statement.” He concludes, “Verse 1 is a summary statement, or formal introduction, which is epexegeted in the rest of the narrative. It appears to this author [Waltke] that this is the only viewpoint that completely satisfies the demands of Hebrew grammar.”¹⁹³ Waltke says he concludes this from Hebrew grammar, but earlier he concluded his theory from logic: “Logic will not allow us to entertain the contradictory notions: God

¹⁹¹ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 225.

¹⁹² Waltke, “Creation, Part IV,” 339.

¹⁹³ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 225-226.

created the organized heavens and earth; the earth was unorganized.” By his logic, 1:1 is the title of 1:2–31. He claims that his position satisfies the grammar, but only because he assumes all was chaos, an assumption he does not prove.

So Waltke reasons that God could not have created chaos, yet earth was $\square \text{ה} \square \text{׳} \text{ת}$ $\text{ב} \text{׳} \text{ח} \text{׳} \text{ו}$ (*tōhû v^ābōhû*, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”), which he understands as chaos. Somehow, he leaps to the conclusion that the *universe* was chaos, and that since God could not have created chaos, then that chaos must have preexisted. If the chaos preexisted, then Genesis 1:1 could not have been the *ex nihilo* creation, so Genesis 1:1 must be a title of 1:2–31.

PROBLEMATIC CLAIMS OF THE TITLE OR SUMMARY THEORY

(8) *Logically, God could not create unorganized chaos, so 1:1 must be something other than ex nihilo creation.* Waltke claims that his position satisfies the grammar. “It appears to this author [Waltke] that this is the only viewpoint that completely satisfies the demands of Hebrew grammar.”¹⁹⁴

As already noted, earlier he concluded his theory from logic: “Logic will not allow us to entertain the contradictory notions: God created the organized heavens and earth; the earth was unorganized.” But his logic is based on the assumption that $\square \text{ה} \square \text{׳} \text{ת}$ $\text{ב} \text{׳} \text{ח} \text{׳} \text{ו}$ (*tōhû v^ābōhû*, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) means “chaos,” an assumption he does not prove. Instead, he seems to derive his chaos concept from ANE chaos myths. He himself says we may derive imagery from ANE myth but we should not derive our theology from ANE mythology. I suggest he is violating his own hermeneutical rule. Then he concludes with pre-creation chaos. In logic, starting with the assumption that one concludes with is called circular reasoning. However, if $\square \text{ה} \square \text{׳} \text{ת}$ $\text{ב} \text{׳} \text{ח} \text{׳} \text{ו}$ (*tōhû v^ābōhû*) does not mean chaos, which we will demonstrate later, his whole logical structure for both the pre-creation chaos theory and the title theory collapses.

Also Waltke contradicts himself on the object of $\square \text{ה} \square \text{׳} \text{ת}$ $\text{ב} \text{׳} \text{ח} \text{׳} \text{ו}$ (*tōhû v^ābōhû*). In his commentary on Genesis, Waltke correctly recognizes that Genesis 1:2 applies $\square \text{ה} \square \text{׳} \text{ת}$ $\text{ב} \text{׳} \text{ח} \text{׳} \text{ו}$ (*tōhû v^ābōhû*) only to planet earth.¹⁹⁵ He claims that this phrase means

¹⁹⁴ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 225-226.

¹⁹⁵ Waltke, *Genesis*, 59.

“chaos.” He correctly applies “created” in Genesis 1:1 to the entire universe. His logical misstep is that he reasons that God could not have created the universe as chaos. Built on this misstep, he claims that “created” meant the transforming of the chaos of the entire universe during the six days. So his theory erroneously claims that the whole universe of the “heavens and earth,” not just planet earth, must have been chaos. But that contradicts his correct exegetical understanding that Genesis 1:2 applies $\text{וַיְהִי עֲרָב} \quad \text{וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ}$ (*tōhû v^ābōhû*) only to planet earth, not to the universe.

Waltke is incorrect that God could not have created darkness or deep. He claims that the “God of order and goodness” did not create “disorder” of “unformed” earth and deep, and certainly not darkness. “A good God characterized by light could not, in consistency with His nature, create evil, disorder, and darkness.”¹⁹⁶ We agree God never created evil. But God did make both the light of day and darkness of night. Isaiah 45:7 states, “I form the light, and create darkness.” Also God created the deep sea. In Job 38:8–11 God asks Job Who birthed the sea. Psalm 95:5 states, “The sea is His, for it was He who made it.” God did create the earth in its condition of being deep-sea-covered and cloud-darkened, but that condition was simply uninhabitable and empty of life, which is not a morally evil state; nor chaos. God did not create chaos, because $\text{וַיְהִי עֲרָב} \quad \text{וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ}$ (*tōhû v^ābōhû*, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) does not mean chaos, as will be argued later. God simply created an unfinished planet earth in Genesis 1:1. Therefore, Genesis 1:1 can mean just what it appears to say, that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

(9) *Since Genesis 1:1 cannot be the creation of chaos, it is only a title.* Waltke assumes all was chaos, an assumption he does not prove.

If the universe was not chaos, then Genesis 1:1 was the creation of the orderly cosmos, not a title.

SUBSTANTIATED CLAIM OF THE TITLE OR SUMMARY THEORY

(7) *“In the beginning God created” not “When God began to create”*

Waltke is correct that Genesis 1:1 is an independent clause, and בְּרֵאשִׁית (*b^erē'shît*, in the beginning) is in the absolute form. So 1:1 should be translated in the traditional way as “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This important conclusion is the

¹⁹⁶ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3,” Part IV, 339.

view of all ancient sources and is well substantiated by the majority of scholars and translations.¹⁹⁷

SUMMARY OF THE TITLE OR SUMMARY THEORY

The title or summary theory is built on the claims of Waltke's pre-creation chaos theory that chaos preexisted with God before Genesis 1:1. In addition, Genesis 1:1 is an independent clause, and תִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים (b^erē'shît, in the beginning) is in the absolute form. So Genesis 1:1 is correctly translated, "In the beginning God created," not "When God began to create." Waltke assumes תִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים (tōhû v^abōhû) means chaos. Then he claims that since God could not have created chaos, Genesis 1:1 cannot be the creation of chaos. So 1:1 was not an act or event (so not the *ex nihilo* creation), but instead is the title or summary of the creation acts in the six days.

4. YOUNG EARTH SCIENCEIFIC CREATIONISM (WITH FLOOD) (YEC)

In 1961 Henry M. Morris, a professor of hydrologic engineering, and John C. Whitcomb, a professor of Old Testament, published *The Genesis Flood* launching the popular modern young earth creation (YEC) movement. I have met and discussed creation amicably with both men and honor them as pioneers in creation theory. Above all others, Henry Morris has been my founding mentor in creation studies. In my two-stage Biblical creation theory which I will explain later, I stand on the shoulders of Dr. Morris, a gentle God-fearing engineer and student of the Bible, and Dr. Whitcomb, a capable Biblical scholar and professor of Old Testament. They concluded that the flood was universal and was in the "third millennium B.C.," at the most the "fourth millennium B.C."¹⁹⁸ This flood dating would suggest a date for Adam of 6,000 to at the most 10,000 years ago. They also opposed chance-driven evolution as the source of life, advocating instead special creation of life out of previously created materials.¹⁹⁹ Above all else, they led the way in the method of creation study that first exegetes the Scripture texts and then seeks from science how God did what

¹⁹⁷ Paul Copan and William Lane Craig in *Creation out of Nothing* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

¹⁹⁸ John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), 224.

¹⁹⁹ Whitcomb and Morris, *Flood*, 446-448; John C. Whitcomb, *The Early Earth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 1972), 26.

they understand that he did. After the publication of *The Genesis Flood*, Henry Morris, continued to develop his ideas on creation with very helpful insights into the Bible. In his voluminous works, he made, I believe, one small exegetical error—a problematic interpretation of Exodus 20:11 from the English Bible. Several other problematic interpretations have resulted from this one small error. Young earth creationist Ken Ham has followed the same theory with the same error on Exodus 20:11 from the English Bible. I honor Henry Morris as a godly, insightful, great pioneer in creation studies for thousands of creationists including myself.

I will be using the title “young earth creation,” often abbreviated YEC; as opposed to old earth creation, OEC; and as opposed to my view of Biblically undated earth creation, UEC. This title, “young earth creation,” is the common title, but it is a little misleading in that those of us who claim that the earth is undated by the Bible would agree that the Bible allows the possibility of a young earth. Moreover, the claim by the young earth creation group is not just that *earth* is 6,000 to at the most 10,000 years old, but that the *universe* is 6,000 to at the most 10,000 years old. Although I will not be using it frequently, perhaps a more accurately descriptive title for the young earth creation theory would be 6,000-year-old-universe theory.

PREUNDERSTANDINGS OF THE YOUNG EARTH CREATION THEORY

(0000) *Scripture is inerrant so errant science should have minimal influence on exegesis.* Presuppositionally this group (along with the advocates of at least half the other theories, including myself) believes in “complete divine inspiration and perspicuity of Scripture,”²⁰⁰ including the inerrancy of the autographs. But then this group tends almost to equate their theory and their exegesis with Scripture as “orthodoxy.” So this group allows very little feedback from science or other theories, even as a double-check (which I advocate), of their exegesis of Scripture for their creation theory.

(000) *Scripture is inerrant so evidence from the created universe will support our creation theory.* These sincere creation scientists believe the Bible is inerrant in the autographs. But they almost equate their theory with Scripture so they assume true data from science will support their theory. “A truly Biblical approach [the young earth 6,000-year-old-

²⁰⁰ John C. Whitcomb, Jr., and Henry Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), xx.

universe theory] will eventually correlate all the factual data of science.”²⁰¹ Advocates of most of the theories would agree that accurately understood Bible data and accurately understood evidence from the creation will correlate or agree. But the “correlate” statement of this group is largely only one way, the Bible, very close to meaning their creation theory as “a truly Biblical approach,” will correlate science. This group seeks evidence from science for their theory with the wholehearted assumption that what they will find in the “factual data of science” will agree with their theory. If it does not agree, it must not be fact. This nearly one-way relationship between their theory that is almost equated to Scripture and evidence from science has become nearly a presupposition of the young earth creation movement.²⁰²

(00) *The Bible inerrantly reveals what God did; true science reveals the means and evidence when there was sufficient time for means. So we should seek the means of the flood by science (but not particularly of the brief six days’ events).* Seeking the means of the flood events was a major breakthrough in modern scientific creationism studies. It is why this view calls itself “*Scientific Creationism*.”²⁰³ Prior to Drs. Whitcomb and Morris, the question was raised, “Why are there millions of salt water sea shells fossilized within the stone of high mountains?” Often the answer was that God created the fossils there.²⁰⁴ Sometimes the answer was the flood, but with no explanation of how the seashells were fossilized *within* the stone rather than simply left lying on the surface. A related question was raised: “Why are there over a dozen different distinct rock layers in the Grand Canyon?” Until *The Genesis Flood*, the assumption among many Christians was that God created the layers there. Drs. Whitcomb and Morris emphasized and popularized the approach that the Bible tells us what happened; then we can learn from science how He brought it about. They demonstrated a proposed method for those millions of seashells becoming fossilized in the stone of the high mountains of the earth and for the layers in the Grand Canyon. That method was the hydrologically active Genesis flood resulting in massive differentially deposited sediment containing vast turbulent water-laid fossil beds. Later, John Baumgardner added the idea of

²⁰¹ Whitcomb and Morris, *Flood*, xxii.

²⁰² I discussed my version of two-stage Biblical creation with one of the two founders and he was quite open and kind to me about my thinking.

²⁰³ Henry Morris, *Scientific Creationism*, (San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1974).

²⁰⁴ Alan Cutler, *The Seashell on the Mountaintop* (New York: Dutton, 2003), 60.

rapid post-flood plate tectonics or orogeny of the massive fossil-bearing differentially deposited sediment from the flood.²⁰⁵ The next question was what means caused the flood.

Creationists, especially young earth creationists, sought means for the flood—vapor blanket or canopy,²⁰⁶ watery comet,²⁰⁷ hydroplate tectonics,²⁰⁸ Black Sea flood,²⁰⁹ a comet or meteor hitting the Indian Ocean,²¹⁰ etc. This discussion of secondary means is very healthy. The discussion has been open to all kinds of proposed means, more than are listed above. As a result of this openness to various proposed means, we may discover the means God actually used. A secondary means in no way diminishes God directing the event. I believe this is the right approach to Scripture and science—recognizing God’s complete control yet if a miracle is not indicated by the text, seeking secondary, even if unusual, means in science, with openness of a variety of proposals. So far, so good on the flood, but what about events in the six days?

Three big event occurred in Genesis 1-9—the *ex nihilo* creation of the heavens and the earth, the six days, and the flood. Necessarily the *ex nihilo* creation was a miracle because that was the event of the creation of time, space, energy, matter, and the God-decreed regularities that we see as the laws of the universe. Almost all creationists see the *ex nihilo* creation as necessarily a miracle, as indicated by Hebrews 11:3. The exegetical question we must constantly ask is, “Does the Bible text indicate a miracle?” A creation event in which the Bible text indicates a miracle should be interpreted as a miracle. But with creation events, where the Bible text does not indicate a miracle, we should follow the example of Henry Morris with the flood and seek means. However, seeking means by the young earth creation movement drops off rapidly as they consider the eight command units in the six days.

(0) *God created the universe with appearance of age.* Related to means is the issue of appearance of age, a problematic issue in this young earth creation group. The problem is

²⁰⁵ John R. Baumgardner, "3-D numerical investigation of the mantle dynamics associated with the breakup of Pangea," in *Flow and Creep in the Solar System: Observations, Modeling, and Theory*, D. B. Stone and S. K. Runcorn, eds., NATO ASI Series C, Vol. 391, 207-224, 1993.

²⁰⁶ Whitcomb and Morris, *Flood*, 121, 255-257.

²⁰⁷ Donald Wesley Patten, *The Biblical Flood and the Ice Epoch* (Seattle: Pacific Meridian Publishing Co., 1966).

²⁰⁸ Walt Brown, *In the Beginning* (Phoenix: Center for Scientific Creation), 2001.

²⁰⁹ William Ryan and Walter Pitman, *Noah’s Flood* (New York: Simon and Schuster), 1998.

²¹⁰ Sandra Blakeslee, “Ancient Crash, Epic Wave,” *New York Times*, November 14, 2006.

called “last thursdayism”²¹¹ or the “omphalos hypothesis” after the creationist book *Omphalos* by Philip Gosse.²¹² Gosse argued that God created everything in six days, all with appearance of age, including fabricated fossils created inside the rocks. Whitcomb and Morris reacted against this view related to the flood and fossils in *The Genesis Flood*, showing means of fossils in rocks, namely a very active Noahic flood. But then young earth creationists largely reverted to the omphalos retreat in the six days. They hold appearance of age inconsistently. So by their view the sun only appears to be a middle-aged star, the earth with its eroded high mountain ranges only appears to be older than 6,000 years, and supernovae explosions millions of light-years away only appear to have happened millions of years ago. To be consistent, by their view, everything beyond 6,000-10,000 light years away only appears to exist. In fact, the whole universe and earth, and everything in them, only appear far older than 6,000-10,000 years, but are not. The problem is not appearance of age, but *deceptive* appearance of age. Young earth creationists have attempted to give means that would circumvent apparent deception by a young universe, but no explanation has been widely accepted as compelling.

CLAIMS OF THE YOUNG EARTH CREATION THEORY

(1) *According to Exodus 20:11 the ex nihilo creation of Genesis 1:1 occurred in the six days.* The key verse of the young earth creation movement has been, not Genesis 1:1, but a verse in the fourth command of Exodus 20, in the English, concerning God working six days so man should work six days. “For *in* six days the LORD made [understood by young earth creationists as *creatio ex nihilo*] heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (v. 11, KJV).²¹³ Young earth creationists routinely have featured this verse prominently as the header on much of their literature. However, recently they do so with the *in* not in italics or with the whole verse in italics, hiding the fact that the *in* originally was italicized in the KJV indicating that it is not in the Hebrew. They frequently follow the quote Exodus 20:11 with a statement that God “created” everything in six days. For example, young earth creationist,

²¹¹ The idea of last thursdayism is that if God created everything by miracles with appearance of age, then why not last Thursday with miraculously implanted memories in us of what was before last Thursday. Either scenario of creation 6,000 years ago or last Thursday is unfalsifiable because both are with appearance of age. Last thursdayism is a refutation by taking the claim to its extreme to show it as ridiculous.

²¹² Philip Henry Gosse, *Omphalos: An attempt to Untie the Geological Knot* (London: Routledge, no date; republished John Van Voorst, 1957), Volume IV in *The Creation Debate 1813-1870*, ed. David Knight.

²¹³ Some now drop this basis of their problematic series but retain the unsupported remainder.

Ken Ham states, “Now, when the Creator God spoke as recorded in Exodus 20:1 [I presume he means 20:1–11 or 20:11], what did He (Jesus) say? As we read on, we find this statement: *For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day . . .* Yes, Jesus did explicitly say He created in six days.”²¹⁴ He emphasizes the “*in*” and interprets “made” as “created.” Then he concludes from this verse that all creation acts were within the six days, so the initial *ex nihilo* creation occurred within the six days. Most young earth creationists say the *ex nihilo* creation occurred *in* day one.

(1a) *Bārā' and 'āsāh are often interchangeable in Genesis 1 and Exodus 20:11.*

Young earth creationist, Ken Ham, says,

The fact is that the words *bārā'* and *'āsāh* are often used interchangeably in the Old Testament; indeed, in some places they are used in synonymous parallelism (e.g., Genesis 1:26-27; Exodus 34:10; Isaiah 41:20; 43:7). Applying this conclusion to Exodus 20:11 (cf. 31:17) as well as Nehemiah 9:6, we see that Scripture teaches that God created the universe (everything) in six days, as outlined in Genesis 1.²¹⁵

Don Batten goes even further and leaves out the “often.” He claims, “‘make’ and ‘create’ (Heb. *bara*) are used interchangeably in Genesis 1.”²¹⁶ The reason for this claim is this: If the two words were interchangeable so הָבַרָא (*'āsāh*; “do, make”) meant “create” in Exodus 20:11 in the identical sense that בָּרָא (*bārā'*, create) means “create” in Genesis 1:1, and if “*in*” were actually in the Hebrew text of Exodus 20:11, then young earth creationists could translate the Exodus 20:11 warrant for working six days thus: “For *in* six days the LORD *'āsāh* [translated as “created”] heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is* . . .” Also if this claim of interchangeability were the case in Genesis 1:16, they could translate that fourth day act as, “And God *'āsāh* [translated as “created”] two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.” Then their theory would be proven Biblically, even with all its other problems.

(1b) *Jesus said in Matthew 19:4 that the Creator from the beginning male and female made them, so little time could pass before humans were created.* An attempt has been made to substitute Matthew 19:4 and Mark 10:6 for the erroneous translation of Exodus 20:11 as a

²¹⁴ Ken Ham, “Did Jesus Say He Created In Six Days, August 25, 2001, [.org/us/newsletters/0801lead.asp](http://www.creation.com/org/us/newsletters/0801lead.asp).

²¹⁵ Ham, *Answers*, 170.

²¹⁶ Don Batten, “‘Soft’ gap sophistry,” *Creation*, 26:3, 46.

new supposed Biblical foundation of a young earth creation. Jesus alluded to the creation from the beginning of male and female as God’s warrant against divorce. The young earth creation theory has taken “from *the* beginning of male and female” (literal Greek word order) as if the text said “from the beginning of the *universe*,” so no time could have passed before day one, so the “beginning” must have been *in* day one.

(2) *In day one, God created not just light; but also time, the heavens as space, and the earth as chaotic matter.* From their problematic understanding of Exodus 20:11, young earth creationists claim that day one was not just the creation of light making the first daylight and nighttime, the latter framed by evening and morning, as Genesis 1:3-5 says, but that God created the heavens and earth *in* day one. Genesis 1:1 was part of day one. Since young earth creationists claim that אָסָאָה (*’āsāh*, “do, make”) in Exodus 20:11 means “created,” they do the same in the fourth day report (1:16), that God created the luminaries out of unformed “earth” on day four. So in Genesis 1:1 the heavens could not have been the sun, moon, and stars obscured by the thick cloud covering planet earth (as Job 26:8–9 states), but must have been space. And since the *ex nihilo* creation occurred in Genesis 1:1, not in the fourth day, but the sun, moon, and stars of the galaxies must have been made of something on the fourth day, then “earth” in Genesis 1:1 must have been chaotic unformed matter throughout space that would become a hundred billion galaxies on day four. Thus, they make day one the creation of heavens as “space,” earth as unformed chaotic “matter.” Since they force Genesis 1:1 into day one, they claim that “beginning” (which we all agree started time) also must have been in day one. So day one on earth began time in the universe. They do all this despite the clear formula of each day beginning with “And God said . . .” which begins day one in Genesis 1:3, rather than in 1:1. They claim that in day one God created “all space (heaven), all time (beginning), and all matter (earth),”²¹⁷ not just the one commanded item, “light.” “God . . . made time (beginning), space (heaven), and matter (earth). This was the beginning of our universe, all part of the first day in time.”²¹⁸ Ham continues, “God gives us a summary of what happened on each of the six days of Creation. Day 1: time, space, Earth, light.”

²¹⁷ Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, 17.

²¹⁸ Ken Ham, *Dinosaurs of Eden* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2001), 9-10.

So from their interpretation of Exodus 20:11 as if it actually had “in,” and as if הָאֵרֶץ (‘*āsâh*) meant “created,” a whole system of dependent derivative interpretations has resulted. Most of these sub-claims under (2) are novel, unique to this young earth creationism theory:

(2a) *Day one, rather than “in the beginning,” was the start of the creation.* God created everything “in six days,” so day one was the beginning of the entire creation. “The primeval creation . . . was the first act of *the first day* of the six days, calling into existence the basic elements of the space-mass-time continuum which constitutes the physical universe” (emphasis mine).²¹⁹ “The tremendous events of creation week . . . began with the *ex nihilo* creation of the [unorganized space-mass-time of the] universe by God *on the first day*” (emphasis mine).²²⁰

(2b) *The “heavens” was space without luminaries.* “The heavens and the earth” is widely recognized as a merism of the entire created universe. But the young earth creation camp posits that the universe had no luminaries until the fourth day. So “the heavens” in Genesis 1:1 must have been “space” without any luminaries. “In Genesis 1:1, the term [heaven] refers to the component of space in the space-mass-time universe.”²²¹

(2c) *“Earth” was unformed matter throughout the universe.* The merism “the heavens and the earth” means the whole universe. If the “heavens” was space, the only other component was the “earth.” So the term “earth” must have meant all matter in the universe. “The term ‘earth’ refers to the component of matter in the universe.”²²²

(2d) *All this matter (“earth”) in the universe was unformed chaos.* Genesis 1:2 states that “earth” was הָאֵרֶץ בְּרֵאשִׁית (tōhû v^ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”). Since young earth creationists claim that “earth” was all that matter of the universe, then all matter in the universe must have been הָאֵרֶץ בְּרֵאשִׁית (tōhû v^ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”), understood by YEC as unformed chaotic proto-matter. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth [space and matter], and the matter so created was at first unformed and uninhabited.”²²³

(2e) *The deep was mixed with earth throughout space.* The הַיָּם הַתְּהוֹם (tehôm, deep ocean) was the water part of the chaotic “earth” that was throughout space. “Initially . . . the

²¹⁹ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994), 42.

²²⁰ Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, 19.

²²¹ Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 41.

²²² *Ibid.*, 41.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 50, 51.

earth had no form; and similarly, this state must apply to the waters also. The picture presented is one of all the basic elements sustained in a pervasive watery matrix throughout the darkness of space.”²²⁴

(2f) *The darkness that covered the deep was darkness throughout space.* If the deep was throughout space, then “darkness on the face of the deep” also must have been throughout space, so the entire “physical universe” had “no light.”²²⁵ “The picture presented is one of all the basic elements . . . *throughout the darkness of space*” (emphasis mine).²²⁶

(2g) *So God created four things on day one—space (heavens), matter (earth), time (beginning), and light.* In day one God created “all space (heaven), all time (beginning), and all matter (earth),”²²⁷ not just the one commanded item, “light.” The light on day one was temporary light for three days, causing day and night either by the light turning on and off every twelve hours on the amorphous unformed matter throughout space called “earth,” or the light shone directionally onto a particular rotating blob of unformed matter that would become our organized planet in a couple of days.

(2h) *Either the expanse of day two was interstellar space, or the atmospheric expanse below a vapor canopy.* Some followers of this system have posited that since on the fourth day God would make the luminaries *in* the expanse that He had made on day two, and we know that the luminaries are in interstellar space, then the expanse made on day two was “interstellar space.”²²⁸ The waters were somehow above and below interstellar space. Henry Morris, who is more careful so much more often correct, sees the expanse as the atmosphere above which may have been a vapor canopy containing water that would contribute to the Noahic flood.

(2i) *Planet earth, rather than just land, was formed on the third day.* Some advocates of this system claim that on the third day God formed planet earth when He separated earth from the waters. “The planet was not formed until day 3 Prior to that ‘earth’ was only some kind of amorphous prematter . . . ready to be made into the planet and other celestials.”²²⁹ Henry Morris took a more conservative Biblical view, that some of the

²²⁴ Ibid., 50.

²²⁵ Ibid., 51.

²²⁶ Ibid., 50.

²²⁷ Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, 17.

²²⁸ Russell H. Humphreys, *Starlight and Time* (Colorado Springs: Master Books, 1995), 58.

²²⁹ Frank DeRemer, “Young biosphere, old universe?” *Technical Journal of AiG* 19:2, 56.

unformed matter must have been separated on day one into a rotating blob in the temporary directional light for day and night.

(2j) *On the fourth day God made the galaxies from “earth.”* On the fourth day, the luminaries of the universe—the sun, moon, and several hundred billion galaxies of stars—were made out of “earth” (or out of the “watery matrix”²³⁰ of “earth” combined with the “deep”). On the fourth day God “placed these ‘lights’ [sun, moon, and stars] throughout the infinite space of heaven that had been created on Day One, these also being made of the same ‘earth’ that had been created on Day One.”²³¹

(2k) *Both Adam and the creation of the universe are dated to about 6,000 years ago.* Since the universe was created a few days before Adam, who is dated to about 6,000 to at the most 10,000 years ago by his descendants’ genealogies, then the universe is 6,000 to 10,000 years old. “As far as the creation of the universe is concerned, this took place five days earlier than the creation of man.”²³²

(2l) *In Romans 5:12 Adam’s death from his sin was both spiritual and physical, so animal death began with Adam’s sin.* The Bible in “Romans 5:12 and Genesis 3:3” with the added teaching of “1 Corinthians 15; Genesis 3:22-23” indicates “that Adam’s sin led to physical death as well as spiritual death. In 1 Corinthians 15 the death of the last Adam (the Lord Jesus Christ) is compared with the death of the first Adam. Jesus suffered physical death for man’s sin, because Adam, the first man, died physically because of sin.”²³³

So far I agree completely, although I might state it a little more theologically precisely. I would add that Adam died immediately spiritually, being radically alienated from God by his sin. That separation is the greatest aspect of spiritual death. That same day Adam immediately entered the certainty and condemnation of physical death, the latter delayed in its final full execution by God’s mercy so he (and we) might believe in God as his Savior—in our case in God the Son Christ as our Savior—Who would die physically for him (and us) so he (and we) might be saved by faith in Him as our wonderful Savior and Lord.

Animal death, however, is a different question. Yes, the principle of death because of sin results in death of true *nephesh* life. But Paul, in Romans 5:12–21, is actually talking

²³⁰ Frank DeRemer says “the luminaries were not made until Day 4, probably from the ‘waters above the expanse’ ” rather than from “earth.” “Young biosphere,” 55.

²³¹ Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, 20.

²³² Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 45.

²³³ Ham, *Answers*, 164.

about human death from Adam's sin, not animal death from Adam's sin. The claim that animal death began with Adam's sin is not explicitly affirmed in Romans 5:12–21 as claimed, nor in Genesis 3:3, 1 Corinthians 15, or Genesis 3:22–23. But if young earth creationists can prove that animal death came only by *Adam's* sin, then animals could not have died before the Fall so the earth must have been only days or weeks old at the fall.

(3) *The six days were normal day-night-cycle days.* This claim is held by about half of the creation theories so it is not unique to the young earth creation theory. This group has ably and persistently defended six normal day-night-cycle days.²³⁴ I agree.

(4) *The recent worldwide Noahic flood deposited the fossils.* In *the Genesis Flood* Henry Morris and John Whitcomb posit a very violent flood in which first “creatures of the sea bottoms would universally be overwhelmed,” forming the lowest fossil layers, followed by deposited layers of sediment with fish, and then the upper geologic layers “entombing animals or reptiles, together with great rafts of vegetation . . . on top of other deposits.”²³⁵ The vegetation produced the world's huge reserves of coal and oil deposits. They believe that this violent flood deposited almost all the successive geologic layers. They claim Noahic flood deposition of locations with tens of thousands of layers, even though these may appear to have been deposited by sequential annual wet and dry seasons.²³⁶ It is also the source of the thick layers of calcium carbonate such as the white cliffs of Dover, coal, oil, ammonium hydrate, etc. from plant and animal life. The flood would have to have deposited fossils of simplest Cambrian-type sea life at the bottom; then crinoids, brachiopods, and trilobites; then extinct nautiloids and extinct sea arthropods; then certain types of extinct primitive fish; then lobed-fin fish, amphibians, and simpler reptiles; then dinosaurs, pteranodons, and plesiosaurs; then extinct mammals and giant birds; and finally, in the top layers only modern non-extinct life including relatively intelligent mammals and humans (which escaped temporary so were last to be covered).

Young earth creationists date the flood about 2300 B.C./B.C.E.²³⁷ to 2500

²³⁴ Jim Stambaugh, “The Days of Creation, A Semantic Approach,” *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 7:2, Fall 2003, 42-68.

²³⁵ Whitcomb and Morris, *Flood*, 265-266.

²³⁶ Others, even if agreeing with a world-wide flood, dispute the Whitcomb and Morris scenario that most of the geologic layers and fossils were Noahic flood deposits.

²³⁷ J. Osgood, “The Date of Noah's Flood” *Creation* 4(1):10-13, March 1981.

B.C./B.C.E.,²³⁸ possibly as early as the previous millennium.²³⁹ This flood initiated subsequent continental tectonic movement with resulting crust folding and orogeny.

If the thousands of feet of fossil rock layers were essentially all deposited by the flood about 4,300 to 5,000 years ago, then the earth could have been created only about 6,000 to 10,000 years ago.

(5) *Chance-driven macroevolution of molecules-to-man did not occur, but rapid microevolution from about 2,500 to 5,000 “kinds” on the Ark to the modern 25,000 air-breathing land species did occur.* “The biblical creation/Fall/Flood/migration model would also predict *rapid* formation of new varieties and even species. This is because all the modern varieties of land vertebrates must have descended from comparatively few animals that disembarked from the ark only around 4,500 years ago.”²⁴⁰ “But no reputable creationist denies speciation—in fact, it is an important part of creationist biology [after the flood] The real issue is whether evolution can explain the *increase of genetic information content*—enough changes to turn microbes into men, *not* simple change through time.” Scientific creationists deny sufficient chance-driven mutations producing “*increase of genetic information content*” resulting in macroevolution of “microbes into men,”²⁴¹ but they accept rapid speciation after the flood.

Advocates of several other creation theories would agree that chance-driven macroevolution of “molecules-to-man” is problematic at best. Of particular concern is the well-recognized fact that the fossil record shows discontinuity between species rather than universally showing slow continuous changes from one species to others. J. J. Duyvené de Wit of the Department of Zoology of the University of the Free State (*Universiteit van die Vrystaat*) in Bloemfontein, South Africa, has explained in *A New Critique of the Transformist Principle in Evolutionary Biology* that there is a “dualistic split” between scientific knowledge of species discontinuity and supra-scientific faith in evolutionary continuity. He states, “Throughout the past century there has always existed a significant minority of first-rate biologists who have never been able to bring themselves to accept the validity of Darwinian claims.” He knows a significant “number of biologists who have

²³⁸ Andrew Snelling, “Geological Conflict,” *Creation ex Nihilo* 22(2):44-47, March 2000.

²³⁹ Whitcomb and Morris, *Flood*, 224.

²⁴⁰ Jonathan Sarfati, *Refuting Evolution 2*, Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2002, 79.

²⁴¹ Sarfati, *Refuting 2*, 77.

expressed some degree of disillusionment”²⁴² with the establishment Darwinian paradigm. As far as I know, de Wit was not a young earth creationist. The point is that young earth creationism does not have a monopoly on those who question the biological establishment’s neo-Darwinian synthesis of chance-driven molecules-to-man macroevolution.

(6) *The gap theory of chaos produced at Genesis 1:2 is grammatically impossible.* This is not one of the five basic claims of the young earth creation theory, but this group strongly and frequently has opposed the gap theory. This has been a great and important contribution of young earth creationists. They have rigorously dismembered the gap theory by demonstrating its fatal grammatical errors.²⁴³ The Gap theory’s middle of three stages—the gap—really is wrong. The great Hebrew scholar, Bruce Waltke, agrees. I agree.

PROBLEMATIC CLAIMS OF THE YOUNG EARTH CREATION THEORY

This group has made wonderful contributions to our understanding of the creation events, but they have made one small error that has harmed their whole theory.

(1) *According to Exodus 20:11 ex nihilo creation of Genesis 1:1 was in the six days.* The young earth creation theory advocates base their whole claim series on their mistaken interpretation from the English Bible of Exodus 20:11: “For *in* six days the LORD made [understood as *creatio ex nihilo*] heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (KJV).²⁴⁴

They interpret “*in*” as if it were being emphasized rather than absent from the original Hebrew text as is indicated by italics in the KJV. They interpret “made” as if it meant “created,” ignoring context. Young earth creationist Ken Ham, states, “Now, when the Creator God spoke as recorded in Exodus 20:1 [presumably he means 20:1–11 or 20:11], what did He (Jesus) say? As we read on, we find this statement: *For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day....* Yes, Jesus did explicitly say He created in six days.”²⁴⁵ It seems less than helpful to quote the entire verse is in italics because in so doing they obscure the fact that the “*in*” is italicized in the KJV, meaning that it is not in the inspired Hebrew text.

²⁴² J. J. Duyvené de Wit, *A New Critique of the Transformist Principle in Evolutionary Biology* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok, 1965), 43; as quoted by John Whitcomb, *The Early Earth, Revised Ed.* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 24.

²⁴³ Mark Rooker, “Genesis 1:1-3: Creation of Recreation,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149:595; 596 July; October, 1992

²⁴⁴ Some now drop this basis of their problematic series but retain the unsupported remainder.

²⁴⁵ Ken Ham, “Did Jesus Say He Created In Six Days?” August 25, 2001, <http://www.answersingenesis.org/us/newsletters/0801lead.asp>.

What a pity that this otherwise great theory was sidetracked by this one small error. There is no “in” in the inspired Hebrew text. It seems that until recently, most young earth creationists did not know this fact. So they fervently believed and ardently defended that God did the *ex nihilo* creation of everything “in” the six days.²⁴⁶

Young earth creationists seem to assume that אָשָׂה (*‘āsāh*, “do, make”) means “created,” which ignores the contextual meaning within the semantic range of אָשָׂה (*‘āsāh*, “do, make”). The two primary meanings of אָשָׂה (*‘āsāh*) are “do, make,”²⁴⁷ which two basic senses may be expanded to include “do work,” and “create” either in the broad summary sense of all God did, or in the sense of fashioning from already created materials.

Henry Morris rightly says, “the context determines the meaning.”²⁴⁸ The context of Exodus 20:11 is the fourth command of 20:8–11 in which God commanded Israel to work six days and not work on the Sabbath. So contextually the sense of אָשָׂה (*‘āsāh*, “do, make”) is “do work,” not “create.” The fourth command is about work, not creation. Thus the verse may be translated literally, “For six days Yahweh did work on the heavens and the earth the sea and all that *is* in them, and rested on day the seventh.” Exodus 20:11 does not say that God created everything *within* six days. By claiming that God created the heavens and earth *in* the six days, young earth creationists force Genesis 1:1 into day one, so they claim that the initial *ex nihilo* creation occurred within day one. All the other problematic claims of the young earth creation camp come out of this foundational fundamentally flawed claim.

(1b) *Jesus said in Matthew 19:4 that the Creator from the beginning male and female made them, so the creation of humans was at the beginning of the creation.*

Jesus alluded to the creation from the beginning of male and female as God’s warrant against divorce. Here is the text of Matthew 19:4:

Οὐκ ἐγένωτε τι κτίσας πρὸ ἀρχῆς ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ποιήσεν τοὺς.²⁴⁹
Not did you read that the [One] creating from *the* beginning male and female made them.

The term ἀρχῆς (*archas*, “beginning”) is genitive, indicating “of” and relates to “male and female.” Young earth creationists have taken “from *the* beginning [*of*] male and female” as if

²⁴⁶ I have shared this problem by publicly read papers at the last three Evangelical Theological Society meeting, so many have come to realize that they really do have a fundamental problem in their theory.

²⁴⁷ Frances Brown, S. R. Driver, C. Briggs, *Hebrew-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 793.

²⁴⁸ Morris, *Flood*, 56.

²⁴⁹ Aland, B., Aland, K., Black, M., Martini, C. M., Metzger, B. M., & Wikgren, A. 1993, c1979. *The Greek New Testament* (4th ed.) . United Bible Societies: Federal Republic of Germany.

the text said “from the beginning of the *universe*.” If God made Adam and Eve at the beginning of the universe, then little or no time could have passed before day one, so the “beginning” must have been *in* day one. This creation must be either of male and female humans or of the universe. The context is about male and female humans, not the universe. The warrant for not divorcing is that from the beginning of the creation of humans (rather creation of the universe) God made them male and female. If Jesus were speaking of the beginning of the universe, which according to the young earth creation theory was on day one, and they say creation was all within the six days and humans were created at the beginning of creation of the *universe*, then humans would have to have been created on day one at the beginning of the six-day creation, not on day six, at the end of the six-day creation. In fact, Jesus’ statement against divorce was not about the universe at all, but the beginning of creation of male and female on day six. So, Jesus’ statement that “from the beginning of the creation [of male and female humans] male and female He made them” does not force the *ex nihilo* creation of Genesis 1:1 into day one and so does not date the creation of the universe.²⁵⁰ It is about the marriage from its beginning with the first male and female.²⁵¹

(2) *In day one God created not just light; but also time, the heavens as space, and the earth as chaotic matter.* From their problematic understanding of Exodus 20:11, young earth creationists claim that day one was not just the creation of light as was commanded in Genesis 1:3, but that God created the heavens and earth *in* day one. They claim that in day one “God . . . made time (beginning), space (heaven), and matter (earth). This was the beginning of our universe, all part of the first day in time.”²⁵²

²⁵⁰ An obscure claim has been made that paragraph divisions added in the Middle Ages prove Genesis 1:1 was in day one. Medieval Jewish Masoretes added vowel points and paragraph ¶ (phe) markers to the Hebrew Bible text just as Christians shortly after added chapter and verse divisions. The Medieval Jewish “phe” divisions are no more inspired than the Medieval Christian chapter divisions. There are “phe” divisions after each of the days which is natural, but not between Genesis 1:2 and the beginning of day one in 1:3. But if Genesis 1:1-2 were within day one, that would have to be proven from the syntax of the Genesis 1:1-5 (as yet not proven), not because of Medieval paragraph division. I checked the great Qumran Isaiah scroll (I have a photo of the Isaiah scroll but not of Qumran Genesis, or I would have checked that) for the first three paragraph ¶ (phe) markers that are in the Masoretic text—Isaiah 1:23, 2:4 and 2:22. None are in the Qumran Isaiah scroll. Therefore, we may conclude that these paragraph markers were added by the Medieval Masoretes so were not in the original text. This young earth creation argument also has no merit.

²⁵¹ R. T. France, *Matthew* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1985), 280; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison *Matthew 19-28: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2004).

²⁵² Ken Ham, *Dinosaurs of Eden* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2001), 9-10.

However, all this interpretive sequence crumbles when one realizes that there is no “*in*” in Exodus 20:11 and that the context is work. Therefore Exodus 20:11 is saying that God worked six days and rested on the seventh, so Israelites should work six days and remember the Sabbath. Then Genesis 1:1–3 may be interpreted normally and literally that in the beginning God created the heavens [the universe] and the earth [our planet]. But the earth was uninhabitable and uninhabited, and darkness was on the surface of the deep ocean. The Spirit of God was located hovering over the surface of the waters. “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’ ” (Gen. 1:3, NASB). “Then” is a correct translation, indicated that day one was a subsequent event after the initial *ex nihilo* creation in Genesis 1:1.

(2a) *Day one, rather than “in the beginning,” was the start of the creation.* God created everything “*in six days,*” so day one was the beginning of the creation and of time. “The primeval creation . . . was the first act *of the first day* of the six days.”²⁵³

This group rightly claims literal interpretation, but they fail to interpret Genesis 1:1 literally that “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” not “On day one God created space and unformed matter.”

(2b) *The “heavens” was space without luminaries.* “In Genesis 1:1, the term [heaven] refers to the component of space in the space-mass-time universe.”²⁵⁴

However, Moses gave his meaning of heavens in Deuteronomy 4:19 as “the sun, and the moon, and the stars,” not space. Defining שָׁמַיִם (hashāmayim; heaven, heavens, sky, abode of stars) as “space” is a bad example of a semantic anachronism. Moses could not have meant the modern concept of “space.”

(2c) *“Earth” was unformed matter throughout the universe.* “The term ‘earth’ refers to the component of matter in the universe.”²⁵⁵

This is another semantic anachronism. By the term “earth,” Moses could not have meant “all the chaotic unformed matter of the universe.” Earth was what was under his feet.

(2d) *All matter (“earth”) in the universe was unformed chaos.*

However, Genesis 1:2 states that “earth,” in distinction from “the heavens and the earth” as the merism meaning the entire universe, was תְּבוֹהוֹת (tōhû v^ābōhû), which means uninhabitable and uninhabited, not chaos. Genesis 1:2 declares that earth was

²⁵³ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994), 42.

²⁵⁴ Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 41.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

uninhabitable and uninhabited.

(2e) *The deep was mixed with earth throughout space.*

However, the תְּהוֹמוֹת (*t'hôm*, deep ocean) was not something in space but the water of the deep ocean covering primeval planet earth, above which the Spirit was hovering and from which land would rise in the third command unit.

(2f) *The darkness that covered the deep was throughout space.* “The picture presented is one of all the basic elements . . . *throughout the darkness of space*” (emphasis mine).²⁵⁶

However, the deep elsewhere is earth’s ocean as indicted in the flood (Gen. 7:11, 8:2) and is associated with the word מַיִם (*māyim*, “waters”) in Genesis 1:2, so the deep is the deep ocean. The Bible only indicates that the darkness was on the surface of the ocean, just as Genesis 1:2 says.

(2g) *So God created four things on day one—space (heavens), matter (earth), time (beginning), and light.*

However, Genesis 1:3 just says that God commanded “light.”

(2h) *Either the expanse of day two was interstellar space or the atmospheric expanse below a vapor canopy.*

Henry Morris is right that the expanse was the atmosphere below the cloud layer.

(2i) *Planet earth, rather than land, was formed on the third day.* “The planet was not formed until day 3 Prior to that ‘earth’ was only some kind of amorphous prematter . . . ready to be made into the planet and other celestials.”²⁵⁷

However, Genesis 1:2 describes the unfinished, ocean covered, darkened earth. Moreover, without a rotating planet there would have been no day and night on day one. Day and night do not occur in outer space, but only on a rotating planet with light on one side. Earth was a planet from its creation in Genesis 1:1, and was a rotating planet in Genesis 1:3. Further, the Bible says nothing about a separation of some amorphous unformed pre-matter on day one or day three to form planet earth. God had already created planet earth in 1:1.

(2j) *On the fourth day God made the galaxies from “earth.”* On the fourth day God “placed these ‘lights’ [sun, moon, and stars] throughout the infinite space of heaven that had

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 50.

²⁵⁷ Frank DeRemer, “Young biosphere, old universe?” *Technical Journal* of AiG 19:2, 56.

been created on Day One, these also being made of the same ‘earth’ that had been created on Day One.”²⁵⁸

However, making several hundred billion galaxies each of about a hundred billion suns from “earth” on day four would seem difficult, especially since earth was already in place in Genesis 1:2 and rotating at least starting by day one for day and night. Moreover, the Bible says nothing anywhere about all the stars being made of “earth.” That claim is an argument from Biblical silence. Besides, spectral analyses of stars indicate that they are primarily hydrogen and helium, not primarily the heavier elements of earth.

(2k) *Both Adam and the creation of the universe are dated to about 6,000 years ago.* “As far as the creation of the universe is concerned, this took place five days earlier than the creation of man.”²⁵⁹

We may roughly date Adam by his descendents’ genealogies. If we take Genesis 1:1 literally, the creation of the universe did not occur in one of the days, but “In the beginning” at an unstated time before the six days. So the universe is however old it is, not however old Adam would be.

(0) *God created the universe with appearance of age.* Especially Duncan and Hall make the claim that all of the creation was miraculous, so the appearance of age is just another miracle.

However, the Bible never says God created the heavens and earth with appearance of age. Also, the Bible does not say whether the universe is 6,000 years old or much older. The age of earth does not seem to be a crucial issue in the Bible, so is not a very crucial issue with me. If someone proves that the universe actually is only 6,000 years old, that is no problem to me. I affirm that the universe is however old it is. But I care deeply, unreservedly, about the character of God. As I have come to understand the issue, I have come to realize that the misinterpretation of Exodus 20:11, forcing the initial creation of the heavens and the earth into day one, resulting in a claim of a 6,000-year-old universe, makes God appear to be a deceiver.²⁶⁰ This is no small issue! Young earth creation 6,000-years-old-universe advocates

²⁵⁸ Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, 20.

²⁵⁹ Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 45.

²⁶⁰ God is truth (Psalm 31:50). He does not deceive. He does allow, within His decreed will, delusion. Such delusion is all around us—Mormons, Islam, agnosticism, addictions, etc. 2 Thessalonians 2:11 states, “And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false.” But the deluding influence that God will send is not of God, but contextually the influence of the “lawless one,”

have suggested various possibilities to show how the universe could be actually only 6,000 years old and avoid this dilemma, but none has been compelling or widely accepted among even young earth 6,000-years-old-universe advocates.

Here is the important point: the question is not, *Can* God make something appear to have age? He can and occasionally has. Appearance of age is no problem theologically, ethically, philosophically, or even practically. The real question is, Did God create with appearance of age that is *deceptive*? That is a huge problem theologically, ethically, and philosophically!

Let me illustrate the difference. When I was in Israel on an archeological dig, I had to turn in all my significant finds to the Israeli Antiquities Authority representative. So for five shekels I bought a replica clay oil lamp, similar to one our team dug up. It appeared to be 2000-3,000 years old but was advertised as a replica. The appearance of age was not deceptive because everyone knew it was a replica. Neither the law of God nor of Israel was broken. But someone else tried to sell to me for 500 shekels “the real thing” that had been “dug out of the ground.” I had been told to beware of uncertified “authentic, antique, ancient” artifacts that were actually manufactured by expert antiquing artisans in the next Arab village by one of the seller’s many uncles or cousins, and then perhaps “aged” a year or so in the ground before being “dug up” and sent to the سوق (souk). The second oil lamp also had appearance of age, but *it was deceptive*, so it was illegal under the laws of the Israeli Antiquities Authority and the law of God.

When Jesus multiplied bread or turned water into wine, no one who witnessed Him do these miracles would have thought the bread or wine was fake, counterfeit, or deceptive even though it appeared to have greater age than it did.²⁶¹ Adam and Eve, being apparently more mature than they were, deceived no one because there was no human there but themselves to be deceived. And they knew how old they were.

In contrast, everything in the universe beyond 6,000 light-years (99.999999+% of the universe is beyond 6,000 ly) either actually is older than 6,000 years (most much older)

generally identified as the Antichrist. We need not shy away from the fact that ultimately God will control even the coming of the Antichrist and his “deluding influence.”

²⁶¹ In John 2, the “ruler of the feast” did not see Jesus do the miracle so temporarily did not realize what had happened, but the servants did and likely told him afterwards. Such temporary lack of information is not deception.

or falsely appears much older, *deceiving* scientists and laymen alike; or there is an explanation that has not yet been understood.

For those without a science background, I will explain briefly. The speed of light in a vacuum is a physical constant (shorthand c). In metric measurement, c is exactly 299,792,458 meters per second or 1,079,252,848.8 kilometers per hour (the length of a meter is defined by c). In miles, the speed of light is approximately 186,282.397 miles per second or 670,616,629.384 miles per hour. Even at that great speed, light from our sun takes eight minutes to reach us, so we see sunspot events eight minutes after they happen. Light from the nearest star, Proxima Centauri, left that star 4.3 years ago because it took 4.3 years for that light to reach us; therefore that star is said to be 4.3 light-years away from us. Astronomers call this “look-back time” because they are actually seeing the past. Light from the nearest full galaxy, the great Andromeda galaxy, apparently took 2.2 million years to reach us, because Andromeda is 2.2 million light-years away. And our universe contains several hundred billion galaxies averaging about a hundred billion stars each. The most distant objects our telescopes can detect are about twelve billion light-years away, so the light that reaches us apparently left twelve billion years ago. Scientists estimate that our universe is about fourteen billion years old, which agrees with these most distant objects.

These distances, though not perfectly precise, are not guesses. The measurement of the distance to stars up to 100 light-years (ly) away is by parallax measurements from earth at the extreme opposite sides of its orbit, half a year apart. From these opposite sides, nearby stars appear to shift slightly in their positions against the farther stars. This apparent shift is called parallax shift. By measuring this shift and knowing the diameter of earth's orbit, astronomers can use simple trigonometry to calculate the parallax angle and thereby the distance to the star.

Overlapping this method is the measurement of star distance by Cepheid variable stars. These stars oscillate in brightness with a regular rhythm. This time period of oscillation directly corresponds to the luminosity of the star. Brighter stars have longer oscillation periods. The ratio of apparent brightness to the period when calibrated by Cepheid variables within the parallax measured distance gives a standard for more distant Cepheid variables. By this method, in 1912 American astronomer Henrietta Leavitt measured the distance to many globular clusters at tens to hundreds of thousands of light-years away. Then Edwin

Hubble first measured the distance to the Andromeda galaxy. Overlapping Cepheid variables are two methods for measuring even greater distances. Type 1A supernovas always explode with the same luminosity, so distance can be measured by the ratio of apparent brightness to known absolute brightness to determine their distance from the earth. Red shift also strongly correlates to distance from the earth. Undoubtedly, minor errors may be made but even with the most conservative measurements, the universe is billions of light-years in radius so is apparently billions of years old.

Earth too may be older than the 6,000 to 10,000 years that young earth creationists claim. Esta van Heerden, a microbiologist of the University of the Free State (*Universiteit van die Vrystaat*) in Bloemfontein, has discovered unique strains of bacteria in a South African gold mine 3.2 kilometers below the ground. Yet bacteria at such depths may have residual genes for oxygen respiration suggesting they came from the surface.²⁶² 10,000 years may be too short a time for such a migration. These and many other observations suggest that the earth may not be that young.

I am *not affirming* the above ages. I have no claim from the Bible for the age of the universe because I have not found an explicit Biblical statement of the age of the universe. I emphatically take the position of a Biblically undated universe and earth creation (UEC). But many scientists are deeply interested, and they have come to the above conclusions with very good evidence. Either these scientists are approximately right, or they have been deceived, or there is a compelling explanation that has not yet surfaced.

D. Russell Humphreys has written a book and recorded a DVD about his theory that the universe may be 14 billion lightyears across yet only 6,000 years old supposedly based on the theory of relativity. Both are titled *Starlight and Time*.²⁶³ Humphreys is “not formally trained in general relativity or cosmology theory.”²⁶⁴ I found his theory problematic from the physics I know. Samuel R. Conner and Hugh Ross, who do have expertise in cosmology and theoretical physics, state, “feedback [to *Starlight and Time*] has been forthcoming, and, to our knowledge, it has been uniformly critical of the theory.”²⁶⁵ Even his own YEC colleagues

²⁶² The Miracle Planet, “The Violent Past,” DVD (New York: Ambrose, 2005)

²⁶³ D. Russell Humphreys, *Starlight and Time* (Colorado Springs: Master Books, 1995).

²⁶⁴ Samuel R. Conner and Hugh Ross, *The Unraveling of Starlight and Time*, www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/unravelling.shtml

²⁶⁵ Conner and Ross, *Unraveling*.

have demonstrated that his theory is mistaken.²⁶⁶ Young earth creationists say, “There is currently no wholly satisfactory solution that is accepted by the majority of creation scientists.”²⁶⁷ In his video *Starlight and Time*, Humphreys claims there must be a young universe explanation based on the YEC (erroneous) interpretation of Exodus 20:11. Humphreys states,

Even if my particular theory should eventually turn out to be wrong, I know that there is a correct creation model of the cosmos, because observation and Scripture both confirm that God made the universe very recently. “For *in* six days God made the heavens and the earth” (Exodus 20:11).²⁶⁸

Humphreys assumes there must be a young earth solution because of “in” in Exodus 20:11.

Unlike old earth creationists (OEC) such as Hugh Ross, I am prepared to accept that science may demonstrate either a young universe (even though Humphreys apparently has failed to do so²⁶⁹), or an old universe as Ross and essentially all secular astrophysicists accept. So far, the evidence as described above is overwhelmingly for an older universe. But I also accept that even in such a strongly attested case as the age of the universe, science could be wrong. As cosmologists and astronomers continue to add evidence, science may approximately date the universe with greater and greater precision, whether young or old. My claim is that the *Bible* does not tell us the age of the universe. Thus, I emphatically claim a Biblically undated universe and earth creation (UEC). Because I believe that the *Bible* does *not* give us an age of the universe, I am not guided by any age-of-the-universe issue in my exegesis.

The young earth creation theory does declare an age for the universe—6,000 to at the most 10,000 years old. As a result, they do seem to be guided in their exegesis by their dating of the universe. Also, they do have a very real deceptive appearance-of-age dilemma. This deceptive age of the universe dilemma should suggest to them that they should double-check

²⁶⁶ John Byl, “On time dilation in cosmology,” *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, vol. 34, number 1, 1977; Samuel R. Conner and Don N. Page, “*Starlight and Time* is the big bang,” *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal*, vol. 12, number 2 (1998):174-194.

²⁶⁷ Ken Ham, Andrew Snelling, Carl Wieland, *The Answers Book* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1993), 185.

²⁶⁸ *Starlight and Time* [DVD] (Evidence Press, 2005).

²⁶⁹ Even Humphreys has abandoned most of his original claims, see Conner and Ross, *Unraveling*.

their exegesis and see if, as I have suggested, they have erred in their interpretation of Exodus 20:11.

A young earth creationist might reply that there is no deception because the Bible says the universe is 6,000 years old. But that claim is simply incorrect. The Bible genealogies roughly date Adam, not the universe. Exodus 20:11 really does not require the creation of the universe *in* the six days, so that creation would have had to occur only a few days before Adam. Nor does Mark 10:6 or Matthew 19:4 restrict creation to 6,000 years ago, as explained earlier. So young earth creationists may claim that creation took place 6,000 years ago, but they are on their own because the Bible makes no such claim. Yet they still have a very real deceptive appearance-of-age dilemma based on their claim of a 6,000 to 10,000 year old universe.

The solution is in the two-stage Biblical creation theory.

PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF YOUNG EARTH CREATION

(0000) *Scripture is inerrant so errant science should have minimal influence on exegesis.* Presuppositionally this group believes in “complete divine inspiration and perspicuity of Scripture.”²⁷⁰ Many of us agree on the inspiration of the autographs. I would qualify perspicuity by the recognition that some parts of Scripture, such as creation, are much more difficult than other parts. But this group tends to almost equate their exegesis and their creation theory with Scripture. So they allow minimal feedback from science or other theories into their exegesis. Their exclusion of other’s critiques is self-exclusion from the hermeneutical spiral of recognizing that each of our theories is errant and that we, therefore, need feedback to come closer to what God said that He did in the creation. On the other hand, Gerald Schroeder may have the opposite error of too much feedback from science.

I suggest a cautious middle way. I suggest that archeology, science, etc. may serve as double-checks after our exegesis of Scripture. Also, we should receive Biblical critique from each other students of Scripture. I “practice what I preach,” reading theories of a wide variety of other creationists and as a result, modifying my understanding of creation.

(000) *Scripture is inerrant so evidence from the created universe will support our creation theory.*

²⁷⁰ John C. Whitcomb, Jr, and Henry Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), xx.

A fundamental problem with the young earth creation camp is that its advocates tend to stay out of the hermeneutical spiral. They have many good Scriptural insights to offer (many of which I have greatly benefited from), but they should join the hermeneutical spiral, not just negatively to criticize other theories, but positively to consider critique from others. The hermeneutical spiral is the correct functioning of the church corporately interacting in our exegesis to seek to understand the Bible more and more accurately. But one cannot enter that spiral if one assumes that his exegesis or theory is almost inerrant, equates his exegesis and theory with Scripture itself, or considers any critique from others as “compromise.” This resistance to considering critique of one’s own theory seems to be an example of resistance to a paradigm shift as suggested by Thomas Kuhn.²⁷¹ The result is the assumption that the young earth creation theory is almost the same as inerrant Scripture, so true evidence from the creation will always support the young earth theory. Any other evidence must have been in error or misinterpreted. But such rigidity excludes one from the feedback we all need. Proverbs 11:14 wisely explains, “Where no counsel *is*, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors *there is safety*” (KJV).

(2a) *Bârâ’ and ’âsâh are often interchangeable in Genesis 1 and in Exodus 20:11.*

Ken Ham, the apparent current leader of the young earth creation movement, claims,

The fact is that the words *bârâ’* and *’âsâh* are often used interchangeably in the Old Testament; indeed, in some places they are used in synonymous parallelism (e.g., Genesis 1:26-27; Exodus 34:10; Isaiah 41:20; 43:7). Applying this conclusion to Exodus 20:11 (cf. 31:17) as well as Nehemiah 9:6, we see that Scripture teaches that God created the universe (everything) in six days, as outlined in Genesis 1.²⁷²

This statement is incorrect and, along with the assumption that “*in*” is in Exodus 20:11, is at the root of their whole problematic system. For then YEC could translated 20:11, “For *in* six days the LORD *created* [*’âsâh*] heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*.”

It is correct that both הָבִיא (’*âsâh*, “do, make”) and בָּרָא (bârâ’, create) are used to refer to creation, but that does not require the two verbs to have the same meaning.

²⁷¹ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

²⁷² Ham, *Answers*, 170.

Don Batten claims, “‘make’ and ‘create’ (Heb. *bara*) are used interchangeably in Genesis 1.”²⁷³ Ham is more careful in his statement, “*bara* and *asah* are often used interchangeably” with “synonymous parallelism,” that is, *often with exactly the same meaning*. Ham takes the meaning from אָבַרַב (‘*bārā’*, create) and imports it into אָסַח (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”) in Exodus 20:11. Here is the evidence:

אָסַח (‘*āsāh*, “do, make”), according to the old standard Brown, Driver, and Briggs, and essentially all lexicons, means “do, make.”²⁷⁴ Gesenius lists “(1) to labor, to work about anything (2); To make, to produce by labour.”²⁷⁵ BibleWorks Strong’s lists, “(1) to do, fashion, accomplish, make 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to do, work, make, produce.”²⁷⁶ Harris, Archer, and Waltke list, “do, fashion, accomplish.” “When used in the sense of ‘make’ the emphasis is on the fashioning of the object.”²⁷⁷ VanGemen lists its meanings as “prepare, set up, create, deal, effect, bring about, obtain, complete, execute, to commit (s.t.), perform work, service; deal with, act, inflect, serve.”²⁷⁸ But it must be remembered that these are nuances of “do, make” and as a variation on “make,” as “create,” the sense is “fashioning of the object.”

In contrast, אָבַרַב (‘*bārā’*, create) according to VanGemen means “create, separate.”²⁷⁹ Strong’s lists “create, shape, form.” Brown, Driver, and Briggs list “shape, create (as by cutting).”²⁸⁰ Harris, Archer, and Waltke explain, “The root *bara’* has the basic meaning ‘to create.’ It differs from *yasar* ‘to fashion’ in that the latter primarily emphasizes the shaping of an object while *bara’* emphasizes the initiation of the object.” Harris continues, “The word is used in such a distinctive sense in the Qal . . . only of God’s activity and is thus a purely theological term. This distinctive use of the word is especially appropriate to the concept of creation by divine fiat.” “The root *bara’* denotes the concept of ‘initiating something new’ in a number of passages” as in Isaiah 41:20. “The word also

²⁷³ Don Batten, “‘Soft’ gap sophistry,” *Creation*, 26:3, 46.

²⁷⁴ Brown, *Hebrew-English Lexicon*, 793; Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, #6213, 657; VanGemen, Vol. 3, *Asah*, (#6913), 549.

²⁷⁵ Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, #6213, 657.

²⁷⁶ BibleWorks for Windows, Strong’s, #6213.

²⁷⁷ R. Laird Harris, Gleason Archer, and Bruce Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 701

²⁷⁸ VanGemen, Vol. 3, *Asah*, (#6913), 549.

²⁷⁹ VanGemen, Vol. 1, *Bara*, (#1343), 728.

²⁸⁰ Brown, *Lexicon*, 135.

possesses the meaning of ‘bringing into existence’ in a number of passages.”²⁸¹ So the *basic* meaning of אֱבָרָא (*bārā’*) is “create,” in the sense of God “initiating something new.”

Is there an overlap between the two words? The meaning of אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*, “do, make”) is very broad with approximately 30 senses. The very general term is used frequently with 5,574 occurrences of just this lemma in the Hebrew Scriptures. Out of all those occurrences, occasionally אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*, “do, make”) is used of God’s work on the heavens and the earth, about half a dozen in the same verse referring to the same object as אֱבָרָא (*bārā’*, “create”). So, among these approximately 30 senses, אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*, “do, make”) may have a small partial overlap with two of the three senses of the majestic and much narrower word אֱבָרָא (*bārā’*, “create”). Because of this occasional partial overlap, several lexicons correctly list “create” as a secondary sense of אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*, “do, make”). But “create” is not the basic primary meaning of אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*, “do, make”), and it is nuanced as “fashioning of the object.”²⁸² Whereas אֱבָרָא (*bārā’*, “create”) as create is “initiating something new” always by God in the Qal. So even in that small partial overlap when we may render both as “create” in English, the nuancing is rather different.

In what sense(s) does אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*, “do, make”) mean create? All the Hebrew senses of “create” do not adhere to אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*). Because the basic core sense of אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*) is “do, make,” with “make in the sense of ‘fashioning of the object,’”²⁸³ when אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*) occasionally has the secondary sense of “create,” אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*) only has the sense of create as “fashioning of the object,”²⁸⁴ or the summary sense of all of the work done by God both in the beginning and fashioning the earth during the six days. אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*) is especially suited to this summary sense of all God’s creative work because אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*) is so broad in meaning.

However, the sense of solely the initial creation *ex nihilo* of Genesis 1:1 (as opposed to the summary of all God’s work both creating and shaping in the six days the heavens and earth) does not seem to be the special sense of אָשָׂא (*’āsāh*). In contrast, אֱבָרָא (*bārā’*, “create”) has that special sense of initiating something new, as in Genesis 1:1. And the core

²⁸¹ Harris, *Wordbook*, 127.

²⁸² Harris, *Wordbook*, 701.

²⁸³ Harris, *Wordbook*, 701.

²⁸⁴ Harris, *Wordbook*, 701.

basic meaning of בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) in the Qal is “create,” with God always as the acting agent in the Qal. To claim that “*bārā'* and *ʾāsāh* are “often used interchangeably,” or without the qualification, “used interchangeably” as Batten claims, seems rather rash.

However, the test is in the texts, so we will examine all the texts Ken Ham listed to see if בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) and עָשָׂה (*ʾāsāh*, “do, make”) are truly “synonymous” and “often used interchangeable” in these texts.

Genesis 1:1. “In the beginning God created [*bārā'*] the heavens and the earth.” By the use of בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”), God “emphasizes the initiation of the object,” “creation by divine fiat,” “initiating something new,” and “bringing into existence”²⁸⁵ of the merism of “the heaven and the earth,” the entire universe. Verse 2 immediately qualifies “the earth” as unfinished, implying that the heavens were essentially finished, especially because בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) is in the qal perfect, which indicates completed action. Would anyone dare claim that עָשָׂה (*ʾāsāh*, “do, make”) is interchangeable with בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) in *Genesis 1:1*? Apparently, Batten would, but he is wrong.

Genesis 1:11. “Then God said, ‘Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed and fruit trees bearing [עָשָׂה , participle from עָשָׂה , *asah*] fruit.’” The plants would “make” fruit by the normal process under God’s normal providence, not by fiat miraculous creation.

Genesis 1:16. The report of the completed work on the fourth day states, “And God made [*asah*] the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; *He made* the stars also” (Gen. 1:16, NASB). God “made . . . to govern” in the sense of “fashioning of the object”²⁸⁶ for the purpose of governing (noun construct with “to”). Contextually, *Genesis 1:16* is the report, not a creation command, and, in fact, would not report the creation of the heavens and earth from 1:14–15 because 1:14–15 was not a creation command either. *Genesis 1:16–17* reported that God made the luminaries carry out several functions in relationship to planet earth—govern and separate day and night and give light on earth.

Genesis 1:26–27. This great text uses both verbs:

²⁸⁵ Harris, *Wordbook*, 127.

²⁸⁶ Harris, *Wordbook*, 701.

Then God said, “Let Us make [הָאֱשֶׁר, *'asah*] man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” And God created [אֱבָרָא, *bara'*] man in His own image, in the image of God He created [אֱבָרָא, *bara'*] him; male and female He created [אֱבָרָא, *bara'*] them (NASB).

God stated His intent that He *'asah* (qal imperfect), would “make,” man in the sense of “fashioning of the object”²⁸⁷ man from the atoms and chemicals of dust, which is explicit in 2:7 with the verb יָצַר, *yatsar*, “form, fashion.” Genesis 1:27 was the actual act by which man was “created” in God’s image and likeness. In verse 27 God emphasized three times that there was more to making man than fashioning, that God אֱבָרָא (*bârâ'*) (qal perfect), “created,” man in His image—both male and female. This body-soul human, who imaged his Creator, was far more than shaped dust, for he was “created” in the image of God. Here is a small overlap in the two verbs, but the triple emphasis of אֱבָרָא (*bârâ'*) narrows the making to actually creating man which indicates much more precisely the initiation of something new, than the broad summary “made” of הָאֱשֶׁר (*'āsâh*, “do, make”) in the sense of fashioning man, or the text would have used הָאֱשֶׁר (*'āsâh*) for all four verbs. The two verbs have some relationship, הָאֱשֶׁר (*'āsâh*, “do, make”) being the broad summary word and אֱבָרָא (*bârâ'*) being the narrow sense of making something new. But the two words are not fully interchangeable in any of the texts so far.

Genesis 2:3. “And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating (אֱבָרָא, *bârâ'*) that he had done (הָאֱשֶׁר, *'āsâh*)” (NIV). The NIV correctly translates the two words, but they are not synonymously parallel or identical in meaning. God had done both creating new things as in 1:1 and on the fifth and sixth days a and also shaping work during the six days.

Genesis 2:4. “This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created (אֱבָרָא, *bârâ'*). [new paragraph] When the LORD God made (הָאֱשֶׁר, *'āsâh*) the earth and the heavens . . .” (NIV). Genesis 2:4a and 2:4b each contains one of the two verbs. Ken Ham does not mention this verse, but some YEC advocates do.

However, if Wiseman and many others including the NIV translators are correct, 2:4a is the *tôlê dôt* (or colophon) is the end of the first narrative unit of Genesis 1:1—2:4a. Genesis

²⁸⁷ Harris, *Wordbook*, 701.

2:4a summarizes the creation. Both Genesis 1:1 and 2:4a say “The heavens and the earth were $\aleph \square \gamma \eta \eta$, (*bârâ’*, “created”), forming a rough chiasm, with three days and four command units on each side.

Genesis 2:4b begins with $\square \square \square \square \square \square$ (*b^eyôm*, “when”) starting the narrative of Adam’s account about himself and his family in Genesis 2:4b—5:1a. Contextually, “earth and heavens” in 2:4b probably refer to God’s work on “land and sky” (anarthrous), the land man will till and the sky from which water had not at that time come.

Genesis 2:4a and 2:4b are not even part of the same narrative. So $\aleph \square \gamma \eta \eta$ (*bârâ’*, “create”) in 2:4a, and $\eta \square \psi \eta \eta$ (*’âsâh*, “do, make”) in 2:4b are not parallel.

Exodus 20:11 and 31:17. As already explained, the context of Exodus 20:11 (and 31:17) is, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ‘Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work...’” (Exodus 20:8–10, NASB). So, in the context of working six days but not working the Sabbath, the sense of $\eta \square \psi \eta \eta$ (*’âsâh*) is “perform work.”²⁸⁸ “For six days Yahweh did work on the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that *is* in them and rested the seventh day” so the Israelites should work six days and rest the seventh. Even if $\eta \square \psi \eta \eta$ (*’âsâh*, “do, make”) means “perform creation work,” the *in* is still missing. Therefore, the warrant in the fourth command for working six days but not the Sabbath would be, “For six days Yahweh performed creation work on the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that *is* in them.” Even adding “creation” to work (which is really not a good literal translation) in no way forces the initial Genesis 1:1 *ex nihilo* creation into the six days.

Nowhere in the six days is the initial $\aleph \square \gamma \eta \eta$ (*bârâ’*), creation, of the earth even mentioned. The creation of “the heavens and the earth” had already been done “in the beginning” before the six days. The *ex nihilo* instantaneously begun creation in the beginning was not part of the six days’ work.

Exodus 34:10. “Then God said, ‘Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform [$\eta \square \psi \eta \eta$, *’âsâh*] miracles which have not been produced [$\aleph \square \gamma \eta \eta$, *bârâ’*] in all the earth’” (NASB). This is the second text Ham claims is “synonymous parallelism,” meaning the two clauses including the two verbs mean the same thing. Here

²⁸⁸ VanGemenen, Vol. 3, *Asah*, (#6913), 549.

הָאֲשָׂה ('*âsâh*) means “do” and אֲבָרָא (*bârâ'*) means “initiating something new.”²⁸⁹ The two verbs are not synonymously parallel poetry verbs, much less interchangeable as Ham claims.

Isaiah 41:20. “That they may see and recognize, And consider and gain insight as well, That the hand of the LORD has done [הָאֲשָׂה, '*âsâh*] this, And the Holy One of Israel has created [אֲבָרָא, *bârâ'*] it.” This is the third verse Ham claims is “synonymous parallelism.” Unlike the previous two, this verse has poetic parallelism. But the parallelism is synthetic parallelism in which the second line adds to the first, not synonymous parallelism as Ham claims. A verb should be nuanced by its basic meaning and its context. The words “done [הָאֲשָׂה, '*âsâh*] this” refer to 40:18-19, concerning the future end-times restoration of the land of Israel in which God will do restoration work by rivers and trees. These rivers will flow and trees will grow, so were הָאֲשָׂה ('*âsâh*), “made.” In contrast, “And the Holy One of Israel has created אֲבָרָא (*bârâ'*, “create”) it” refers back to the amazing promises by “the Holy One of Israel” in verses 14: “ ‘Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel; I will help you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. Behold I have made [אֲבָרָא, *bârâ'*, “put, place, set, appoint, make”] you [into] a new sharp threshing sled.’ ” Here is the basic meaning of אֲבָרָא (*bârâ'*), to make something new. Restoration work of trees is not synonymous with the creation work of creating new spiritual life by *redeeming* the up till then unbelieving Chosen People and then making them into a “new” instrument in God’s hands. Growing trees is הָאֲשָׂה ('*âsâh*) doing work. Creating new spiritual life, redeeming a previously spiritually dead people, and making them a “new” instrument in God’s hands is a miracle of אֲבָרָא (*bârâ'*), creation. The two verbs are not synonymously parallel, and the they do not mean the same thing.

Isaiah 43:7. “Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made” (NASB). This is the fourth and last verse Ham cites as having synonymous parallelism, so he can claim that אֲבָרָא (*bârâ'* create) and הָאֲשָׂה ('*âsâh*, “do, make”) have the same meaning, so that הָאֲשָׂה ('*âsâh*, “do, make”) in Exodus 20:11 can mean that God “created” everything within the six days. Here we do have a verse with some poetic parallelism with four verbs including אֲבָרָא (*bârâ'*, “create”) and הָאֲשָׂה ('*âsâh*, “do, make”). But is the parallelism synonymous so each phrase means the

²⁸⁹ Harris, *Wordbook*, 127.

same thing, or synthetic so each phrase adds more meaning? The context is the future (to Isaiah) bringing back of God’s Chosen People to the land of Israel. The verse describes Israel with four phrases and four verbs: “called [קָרָא, *qarâ*] by My name,” “created [בָּרָא, *bârâ*] for My glory,” “formed [יָצַר, *yatsar*],” and “made [עָשָׂה, *’âsâh*].” The form is synthetic parallelism, not synonymous parallelism. “Called by My name” is not synonymous with “created for My glory” which is not synonymous with “formed” or “made.” If this were synonymous parallelism, all four phrases would have the same meaning. They do not.

Nehemiah 9:6. Ham claims that *Nehemiah 9:6* “teaches that God created the universe (everything) in six days, as outlined in *Genesis 1*.²⁹⁰

Thou alone art the LORD.
 Thou hast made [עָשָׂה, *’âsâh*] the heavens,
 The heaven of heavens with all their host,
 The earth and all that is on it,
 The seas and all that is in them.
 Thou dost give life to all of them,
 And the heavenly host bows down before Thee (NASB).

But *Nehemiah 9:6* does not teach “that God created the universe (everything) in six days.” So *Nehemiah 9:6* does not force *Genesis 1:1-2* into the six days. Ham’s claim is incorrect. Ham must assume “(everything) in six days” so much that he reads it into *Nehemiah*. That is called isogesis. Nor does *Genesis 1* “outline” that the universe was created “in 6 days” rather than “in the beginning.” *Nehemiah 9:6* just says God made everything, using the very broad word עָשָׂה (*’âsâh*, “do, make”) that covers the entire gamut of all God did. We may conclude that *Nehemiah 9:6* says nothing about the initial creation being in the six days.

We may conclude that Ken Ham has failed to prove his claim that בָּרָא (*bârâ*, “create”) and עָשָׂה (*’âsâh*, “do, make”) are “interchangeable” and “synonymous” in meaning in *Exodus 20:11* or *Genesis 1:16*. Therefore, neither the עָשָׂה (*’âsâh*) summary of the fourth day, in which the jussive command is actually, “let there be lights in the expanse of the sky” (*Genesis 1:14*), nor in “For six days Yahweh did work on the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that *is* in them” (*Exodus 20:11*) does עָשָׂה (*’âsâh*) mean “created” in

²⁹⁰ Ham, *Answers*, 170.

the sense of אֶרֶץ תְּחִלָּה (*bârâ'*) in Genesis 1:1. The initial creation was not in the six days, but was “In the beginning” at an unstated time before the six days.

I am not attacking Ken Ham as a person or fellow Christian. I have met him and tried to share this with him from the Hebrew, but without apparent success. However that may be, Ken Ham’s claim “we see that Scripture teaches that God created the universe (everything) in six days, as outlined in Genesis 1”²⁹¹ is not proven by the Scripture texts he listed.

(00) The Bible inerrantly reveals what God did; true science reveals the means and evidence when there was sufficient time for means. So we should seek the means of the flood by science (but not particularly of the six days’ events).

I agree that the Bible reveals what God did. I agree that true science reveals the means and evidence. I agree that we should seek means where the Bible does not indicate a miracle. Henry Morris stressed seeking means by his groundbreaking study of the flood. This is a great advance in creation studies. So I agree with the above up to the parenthesis. But to be consistent, we should seek means in the six days as well, except where the text indicates a creation miracle. The young earth creationists tend not to seek means in the six days.

Here is what I think is the basis of their presuppositional inconsistency: The young earth creation theory collapses the initial *ex nihilo* creation into the six days and sees them as a unit. Almost all creationists believe the initial *ex nihilo* creation was an extraordinary miracle. Since the young earth creation theory collapses the *ex nihilo* creation into the six days, they apparently presuppositionally tend to assume that the whole six-day unit was almost entirely by extraordinary miracles.

Yet both the flood and the six days’ events were equally acts of God. Both came from the word of God—the six days by the eight command units, and the flood by God’s word: “I will send rain” for forty days (Gen. 7:4). The young earth creationists see the forty-day rainfall for the flood from unusual but secondary “ordinary providence” means, but they seem *not* to see the watered ground sprouting plants and trees in the six days (Gen. 2:5–6 with 1:11–12) as by secondary “ordinary providence” means. Yet both were from the requisite water initiated by God. Kline has cogently argued that Genesis 2:5–6 explains there were no land plants because God had not sent rain—the ordinary means by which land plants grow. Kline concludes that in addition to performing miraculous originating acts, God acted

²⁹¹ Ham, *Answers*, 170.

during the six days largely as He does now, by non-miraculous providence means, in the case of land plants by sending rain. Others may translate the word עָדָם (*ēd*) as “streams” or “mist,” but the point is the same—no water, no plants; then water and then plants.

The problem is that young earth creationists apply their presupposition inconsistently. For the flood events, they seek to discover unusual but largely non-miraculous means. But regarding the six days, young earth creationists tend to claim that nearly everything was miraculous—from the growing of plants and trees with the appearance of age in day three, to the universe suddenly in place with the appearance of age in day four. So they look for means from science for the flood but largely ignore means for most of the events of the six days. Although I am very sympathetic with this group, I have to point out that their application of their presupposition seems inconsistent.

A more consistent approach honoring the text is to see the use of the term בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) in the creation events as indicating an extraordinary miracle initiating something new. בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) is unusual. In all of Scripture, only God is the acting Person with בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) in the qal.²⁹² בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) is the term God chose to describe the initial *ex nihilo* creation. בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) has a special significance in Genesis 1 that is not in the more general “do, make” term עָשָׂה (*'āsāh*, “do, make”). So בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) may indicate the miraculous and עָשָׂה (*'āsāh*, “do, make”) God’s work mediated by means.

God used the term עָשָׂה (*'āsāh*, “do, make”) for works in which He sovereignly chose to use at least *some* degree of means or materials. The verb עָשָׂה (*'āsāh*, “do, make”) in 1:7 is used of God commanding the open air to form between the water clouds above and the sea below. Also עָשָׂה (*'āsāh*; “do, make”) is used in Genesis 1:11 in which the acting subject of עָשָׂה (*'āsāh*, “do, make”) is a fruit tree growing fruit. Normal means were in play, ground from the third command unit, and water (Genesis 2:6 referring back to that time), and sunlight from the first command unit. In 1:16 God made the greater and lesser lights to rule day and night. In 1:25 God used materials to make animals because they will “return” to dust and in 1:26 He made man’s body, again using already created material.

²⁹² There is the word *barah*, Strong’s #1260 (as opposed to *bara*, #1254) that means to eat, that is used of people eating food. There is also an Aramaic word in Daniel, *ba* #1251, that may take the form *bara*, but that is not the word we are examining.

God used the term בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) for three creation events: the initial creation, the creation of the first animal life, and three times in a single verse for the creation of mankind. These are very special events, far greater than fruit trees producing fruit. The first בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) creation event was *ex nihilo* as theologically nuanced by Hebrews 11:3. This certainly was a miracle. That event set the tone for the term in the Genesis 1 narrative. The other two events using the term בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) involved a special work of God that we may see as miraculous. God created the first soulish *nephesh* animal life in the sea which may be seen as extending over into sea and land animals as well, and God created humans with soul/spirit, in His image. The universe was created from nothing; the higher animal non-eternal soulish *nephesh* aspect was created from nothing; and the spirit and image in man was created from nothing. All three of these events speak against chance evolution of the universe, animal life, and especially of mankind. But nowhere else in the six days is the term בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) used. I would suggest that the text is indicating to us that God sovereignly may have chosen to use means at least to some degree in those non-*bara* other events. This is a more consistent text-based objective discriminating proposal—that we should see the miraculous in בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) events, but we should consider if God sovereignly chose to use at least *some* degree of means or materials for the non-*bārā'* events of the six-days in Genesis 1.

Genesis 2:3 would seem to indicate that God was doing two kinds of work. “Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created [בָּרָא , *bārā'*] and made [עָשָׂה , '*āsāh*]” (Gen. 2:3, NASB). God is indicating that He had done two kinds of works in Genesis 1. God did miraculous בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) works of the *ex nihilo* creation in 1:1, the creation of the first soulish *nephesh* animal life, and the creation of mankind with spirit; but also He was “doing” [עָשָׂה , '*āsāh*] works of “making” that were within His normal sovereignly decreed regularities that we see as natural laws.

The term בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) outside Genesis 1 does always indicate extraordinary miracles. Also עָשָׂה (*āsāh*, “do, make”) outside Genesis 1:1—2:4a occasionally functions as a summary word of the whole creation. But within Genesis 1:1—2:4a בָּרָא [*bara*] indicate acts that God did by extraordinary miracles, whereas other verbs

generally seem to indicate that God sovereignly employed some degree of means or materials.

Thus we should seek means in Genesis 1:1–2:4a rather than see every event in the creation time as a miracle. The two different verbs at least hint at two different kinds of divine acts.

(21) *In Romans 5:12 Adam's death from his sin was both spiritual and physical, so animal death began with Adam's sin.* “Romans 5:12 and Genesis 3:3” indicate “that Adam's sin led to physical death as well as spiritual death. In 1 Corinthians 15 the death of the last Adam (the Lord Jesus Christ) is compared with the death of the first Adam. Jesus suffered physical death for man's sin, because Adam, the first man, brought physically death by his sin.”²⁹³

I believe death is most crucially separation from God, and the other consequences followed. “The penalty was actually executed on the day that man sinned, though the full execution of it was temporarily stayed by the grace of God.”²⁹⁴ I agree death came by sin.²⁹⁵

The problem comes with Ken Ham's extension of Romans 5:12. He says “death came only after Adam sinned,”²⁹⁶ not only for humans, but he implies for animals as well. The text does indicate that “through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” (NASB) This text clearly indicates both spiritual and physical death for all mankind from Adam's sin. But does the text explicitly say Adam's sin resulted in animal death? The young earth creation theory needs animal death begun by Adam's sin to sustain animal life no earlier than one day before Adam. Regardless of the question of animal life no more than one day before Adam, Romans 5:12–21 does not explicitly affirm animal death by Adam's sin. Ken Ham leaves out the context of Romans 5:12, namely verses 12–21. Verse 18 clearly states, “So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men,” not to all men and animals. Romans 5 does not explicitly state that Adam's sin condemned animals to death. 1 Corinthians 15:22 (which Ham also cites) states, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.” The analogy is that in Adam, all humans of Adam's race die; so in Christ, all humans of the new

²⁹³ Ham, *Answers*, 164.

²⁹⁴ Lewis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1939), 258-259.

²⁹⁵ Douglas Moo, *Romans 1-8* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 331-332; an outstanding Greek commentary and refers to Wedderburn, “Theological Structure, 339-342. “The death was a physico-spiritual entity.”

²⁹⁶ Ham, *Answers*, 165.

believing race “shall be made alive.” Paul is not saying all animals die in Adam and, therefore, all animals are made alive in Christ. Genesis 3:3 (which Ham also cites) is about the tree of life, so has nothing to do with animal death. Romans 5:12–21 does seem to affirm a general principle of death by sin. The alternative to Ken Ham’s view of animal death by Adam’s sin is that animal death may have begun with Lucifer’s sin (in keeping with the general principle of death by sin), which necessarily occurred before Adam’s sin. I am not claiming this view as a certainty. But Ham has overstated what the Bible actually says.

So I emphatically agree with human spiritual and physical death by Adam’s sin. Romans 5:12–21 seems to affirm the general principle of death by sin. But animal death begun by Adam’s sin is not explicitly in Romans 5:12–21, nor in any of the other texts Ken Ham has listed.

(4) *The recent worldwide Noahic flood produced most geology and fossils.* I agree that the Noahic flood occurred and that it laid down fossils. The question that is beyond the purview of this study on the creation is whether the Noahic flood was the source of almost all geology, as young earth creationists seem to claim.

(5) *Chance-driven macroevolution of molecules-to-man did not occur, but rapid microevolution from 5,000 “kinds” on the ark to the modern 25,000 species did occur.* Other than theistic evolutionists, most creationists do not accept macroevolution by chance-driven-mutations sufficient to “*increase of genetic information content*” to result in “microbes into men” all by random chance. Hugh Ross criticizes young earth creationists for rejecting evolution on the one hand yet claiming such rapid vast microevolution after the flood on the other hand. Young earth creationists claim rapid microevolution from 2,500 to 5,000 “kinds” on the Ark to the present number of species. The rapid microevolution of the present air-breathing land mammals (5,000) and bats (1,000), birds (10,000), reptiles (8,000), and possibly amphibians (6,000) for a total of 24,000 to 30,000 living 21st century air-breathing land species plus extinct species from the claimed 2,500 to 5,000 kinds on the ark in less than 5,000 years seems problematic. I do not agree with a local flood, but there is another solution. However, that solution is beyond the purview of this study.

(2k) *Both Adam and the creation of the universe are about 6,000 to at the most 10,000 years ago.* We may agree that Adam may be dated by his descendents’ genealogies to about 6,000 to at the most roughly 10,000 years ago. Recently, young earth creationists have

emphasized the slogan, “Thousands, not millions.” The problem with this slogan is that it does not identify who or what is “thousands, not millions” of years old. The basis of “thousands, not millions” is Adam’s descendants’ genealogies. Adam, not the universe, is dated by Adam’s descendants’ genealogies. But young earth creationists are using Adam’s date plus a few days to determine the date of “In the beginning,” a problematic conceptual leap and one that is, I believe, not supported by the Bible text. We agree on dating Adam as thousands, not millions. (By, “we” I am joining whichever author in agreement with him on that claim point or part of a claim, not necessarily assuming my readers will agree, so not necessarily including them in the plural, and not necessarily agreeing with all the claims.)

Again, I am not claiming a Biblical age of the universe other than a minimum of older than Adam on the one hand and a finite age on the other. What I am objecting to is dating the universe by Adam’s date. The “beginning” is not tied exegetically to Adam’s date in any way. Thus, I believe emphatically in a Biblically undated universe and earth creation (UEC).

LARGELY *SUBSTANTIATED* CLAIMS OF YOUNG EARTH SCIENTIFIC CREATIONISM

(3) *The six days were normal day-night-cycle days.*

Several of the different creation theories hold this claim. I agree with the claim. As I studied all ten theories, I had expected a more rigorous defense from the Hebrew text of alternative views of the six days. Archer and Ross have done the most, but Ross’s defense was based almost entirely on semantic range, which really does not prove the meaning in a particular passage, just the possible range of meanings in all texts.²⁹⁷ So that expectation remains unmet. In contrast, six normal day-night-cycle days advocates have mounted a linguistically rigorous defense of their view.²⁹⁸ We will consider the various views of the days later with one of the four diagnostic questions.

(6) *The middle stage or “gap” that earth “became” chaos in the gap theory is grammatically wrong.* Young earth creationists have rigorously dismembered the gap theory by demonstrating its fatal grammatical errors.²⁹⁹ Bruce Waltke also agrees. I agree.

²⁹⁷ Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004).

²⁹⁸ Jim Stambaugh, “The Days of Creation, A Semantic Approach,” *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 7:2, Fall 2003, 42-68.

²⁹⁹ Mark Rooker, “Genesis 1:1-3: Creation of Recreation,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149:595; 596 July; October, 1992

Thus, we may agree with Henry Morris on normal daylight-nighttime cycle days, no chance-driven macroevolution, no gap at Genesis 1:2, Adam's approximate dating, and the flood—the most basic points made by Henry Morris and John Whitcomb in *The Genesis Flood* and by Morris alone in numerous books. On the other hand, we may regret that Henry Morris made that one error of failing to note the italics of “in” and thus failing to understand that the Hebrew has no “in” within the phrase “For *in* six days” of Exodus 20:11. All the other errors of the young earth creation theory grow out of this one foundational source.

A VARIATION OF SIX TWENTY FOUR HOUR DAYS CREATIONISM THEORY

J. Ligon Duncan III and David W Hall present a six day creationism theory that avoids dating the universe. Primarily, I will be interacting with the above young earth creation theory. However, I do wish to acknowledge this version. It has the following claims:

(00) *The Bible tells us accurately what God did; science does not.* “The evangelical tradition has not assigned the same epistemological authority to natural revelation as to special revelation rightly interpreted. When forced to choose between conflicting sources of authority we join the chorus begun by the apostle Paul, ‘Let God be true, and every man a liar’ (Rom. 3:4).”³⁰⁰ Duncan and Hall argue improperly. They are mixing issues. Most evangelicals, including myself, would agree with their first sentence above. But the second sentence appears to equate “natural revelation” with “every man a liar.” If so, this is an improper equating.

(0) *All creation events were unmediated instantaneous miraculous acts.*³⁰¹ The creation of man and the other creation events were done “instantly and without assistance from other forces.”³⁰² The events were “unmediated creation.”³⁰³ The creation was “unassisted work among the Trinity.”³⁰⁴ These are two claims, not one. First, they claim that no other Creator created. Almost all creationists agree. Second, they claim that the creation events were *not* processes by which God worked providentially through the agency of the

³⁰⁰ J. Ligon Duncan III and David W. Hall, “The 24-Hour View,” in David G Hagopian, *The Genesis Debate* (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux Press, 2001), 59.

³⁰¹ They allow “a brief period” of time for example in the forming of the “seas.” *Genesis*, 39.

³⁰² Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 37.

³⁰³ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 39.

³⁰⁴ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 39.

materials, physical laws, or processes that He had already created. In the last sentence of their discussion of immediate rather than mediated creation, they define mediated creation as “creation that depends on normal providence and secondary agents.”³⁰⁵ They reject mediated creation. Instead, they claim, “It was a miracle in a week saturated with the miraculous.”³⁰⁶

These six day creationists repeatedly use the term “created”—of “light,” of “expanse and the seas,” of “land masses and vegetation,” of “celestial bodies,” and of “land animals”—where the English Bible does not use the word “created,” because the Hebrew Bible does not use the term בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”). This reflects their presuppositional belief that all these were created miraculously and instantly or nearly so. We all agree God did the miraculous in the creation. The question I must ask is, Does the Bible claim that *all* the events of the six days were miracles rather than some being commanded processes involving materials and laws God had already created?

(1) *God created ex nihilo at a time undated by the Bible.*

(1a) *God created everything ex nihilo.* “God created the world [*ex nihilo*] and is distinct from it (but not unconcerned about it).”³⁰⁷ “He made everything. But the text also hints at the manner of method of this work: creation *ex nihilo*—out of nothing.”³⁰⁸

(1b) *The universe is not directly dated by the Bible.* “We take no position on the age of the universe precisely because that question is not directly addressed by the canon.”³⁰⁹ These six-day creationists are correct in not assigning an age of the universe from Adam’s genealogy. But they seem not to notice that this “on position” apparently conflicts with their statements, “God . . . created all things in the space of six normal days,”³¹⁰ and “creation out of nothing by God’s word in the space of six normal days.”³¹¹

(1c) *The creation shaped formlessness into order.* With the following statement, they seem to take a mild form of the initial chaos view: “God shaped His creation from formlessness into order and filled it from emptiness into fullness.”³¹² But in the next statement they seem to lean toward the summary view of 1:1 which fits with the pre-creation

³⁰⁵ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 41.

³⁰⁶ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 52.

³⁰⁷ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 26.

³⁰⁸ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 27.

³⁰⁹ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 22.

³¹⁰ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 37.

³¹¹ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 46.

³¹² Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 26.

chaos theory: “Genesis 1:1-2 provides an overview of the pre-creation state.”³¹³ They seem internally inconsistent.

(2) *God used six days and eight commands*

(2a) *The six days were normal day-night-cycle days* “Compelling exegetical evidence for reading the creation days as anything other than normal days is lacking.”³¹⁴ Exodus 20:11 affirms that the six days were normal days, consisting of twelve hours of darkness and twelve hours of light.³¹⁵ It is unclear whether they claim that the initial creation occurred within the six days as do the previous advocates of the young earth creationism.

(2b) *In those six normal days, God spoke in “eight simple commands.”*³¹⁶ “By eight simple commands, God spoke the world into reality.”³¹⁷ These commands filled a six-part formula: “(1) introductory word (‘Then God said’); (2) creative word (‘let there be’); (3) fulfillment word (‘and it was so’); (4) lordship word (‘God called’); (5) commending word (‘it was good,’ beginning on Day 3); (6) concluding word (‘and there was evening...’).”³¹⁸

(2c) *God created the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day.* “God is so independent of creation that He did not hesitate to create those grand luminaries until the halfway point in His work.”³¹⁹ This “cosmology is the apologetic, the vehicle of Moses’ theological agenda”³²⁰ of declaring that God created everything, so objects such as the sun and moon are not gods to be worshiped. Before the fourth day, “God, the Creator, may have employed nonsolar sources of light before creating the sun.”³²¹

(2d) *God created man after His kind.* God made the creatures “after their kind” but created man “in Our image.” “Moses is telling us that man is of the genus of God.”³²²

(3) *God created earth originally good so earth became different after Adam’s fall, the flood, and Babel.* “God’s world was originally good and, therefore, different from the corrupted world in which we now live. Man’s sin is entirely responsible for corrupting original creation. God’s character (justice and mercy) is revealed as He responds to the three

³¹³ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 54.

³¹⁴ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 23.

³¹⁵ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 38.

³¹⁶ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 31.

³¹⁷ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 31.

³¹⁸ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 32.

³¹⁹ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 32.

³²⁰ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 35.

³²¹ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 52.

³²² Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 33. Text states this is from Nigel Cameron, but gives no reference.

‘low points’ of primeval history”—the fall, the flood and Babel.”³²³

PROBLEMATIC CLAIMS OF TWENTY FOUR HOUR DAYS THEORY

(00) *The Bible tells us accurately what God did; science does not.* “The evangelical tradition has not assigned the same epistemological authority to natural revelation as to special revelation rightly interpreted.”

I agree, but then they add, “When forced to choose between conflicting sources of authority we join the chorus begun by the apostle Paul, ‘Let God be true, and every man a liar’ (Rom. 3:4).”³²⁴ They recognize the reality of both special and natural revelation. But then they seem to be saying that natural revelation is necessarily so bound to man who is “a liar” that when there is conflict they will join Paul, presuming he would be against the natural revelation. They confuse natural revelation with the apprehension of natural revelation by science. Also they fail to recognize what Ross has pointed out—that both special and natural revelation must be interpreted and we can err in interpreting either. Also, Ross would respond that both forms of revelation are from God so both necessarily proclaim truth; therefore special and natural revelation cannot conflict. We all agree with Romans 3:4, but they quote this verse expressing a general principle, that humans lie, to prove their particular creation theory. They are arguing from a general truism that does not fit their particular case. The case is special revelation from God compared to natural revelation from God. Since neither is from man, then Romans 3:4 does not prove their creation theory that is from them as humans as opposed to another creation theory also from humans. Are they assuming their version of creation theory is inerrant?

They conclude, “We side with what the Scriptures teach about the days of creation.”³²⁵ All ten theories intend to side with Scripture. If they mean that their interpretation equals Scripture on all points, then they are claiming inerrancy for their interpretation. I would suggest a little more humility and that they join the rest of us imperfect interpreters struggling to learn from God’s Word, for God alone is inerrant.

(0) *All creation events were unmediated instantaneous miraculous acts.* The creation

³²³ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 26.

³²⁴ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 59.

³²⁵ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 60.

was done “instantly and without assistance from other forces.”³²⁶ The events were “unmediated creation”³²⁷ by which they make two claims, that the creation was “unassisted work among the Trinity” and also God did not employ “normal providence and secondary agents.”³²⁸ “It was a miracle in a week saturated with the miraculous.”³²⁹

They mix together several different claims as if they were one. We agree that the initial *ex nihilo* creation was instantaneous and a miracle. We agree that God was not dependent on some other sentient Creation agent to help create. We agree there is a strong case for normal day-night cycle days. Yet the text itself does not declare that God never used processes on substances He had already created. But Duncan and Hall, in their ardor to defend normal days, deny that God did any providentially mediated processes during the six days. Yet they seem to fudge on mediation³³⁰ in Genesis 1:11–12, “Let the earth sprout vegetation . . . And the earth brought forth vegetation,” and 2:9, “God caused to grow every tree.” These texts seem to declare that plants grew at God’s command by the mediation of the earth. They say, “Here we see that even mediate creation comes from the hand of God.”³³¹ But then they conclude, “We cannot legitimately interpret any of the Old Testament Scriptures to support *mediated* creation.”³³²

Certainly, the miraculous occurred, but is there *text evidence* declaring every event in the six days a miracle outside the physical laws God decreed, or is this only an assumption?

They seem to see only two options: the “miraculous or impose a contradiction on Scripture.”³³³ One wonders about the fallacy of the false dichotomy by the misuse of the “or” operator.

Concerning all the events in the sixth day, their answer is that this is “no real problem especially if we *assume the miraculous*” (emphasis added). But does Scripture declare that what Adam did during the sixth day such as naming the animals was miraculous, or do these two authors simply “assume the miraculous?”

They quote Isaiah 42:5, that God “created heavens and stretched them out.” Yet

³²⁶ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 37.

³²⁷ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 39.

³²⁸ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 41.

³²⁹ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 52.

³³⁰ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 32.

³³¹ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 32.

³³² Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 41.

³³³ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 54.

“stretched out” inherently seems to be a process carried out by God, and science is seeking to learn how the universe is stretching out and probably will discover the laws God put into effect. Duncan and Hall assume that the stretching out was miraculous, but the text does not say that.

Duncan and Hall accuse Ross and Archer of claiming only natural processes.³³⁴ However, in fairness to Ross and Archer, that is a false accusation. Ross certainly believes that the initial creation of the universe, the creation of life, and the creation of Adam and Eve involved God’s miraculous work. Ross states, “They (young-earth creationists) have been battling their ally: scientific advance on virtually all fronts, which increasingly support theistic, interventionist (that is, miraculous) view of life’s origin and development.”³³⁵

I must wonder why Duncan and Hall add this unnecessary problematic claim—that almost *every* event was an instantaneous or near-instantaneous miracle—as part of their defense of normal day-night-cycle days. All they had to do was show the simple clear text evidence for day-night-cycle normal days.

PARTIALLY *SUBSTANTIATED* CLAIMS OF TWENTY FOUR HOUR DAYS THEORY

(2d) *God created man after His kind.* God made the creatures “after their kind” but created man “in Our image.” “Moses is telling us that man is of the genus of God.”³³⁶

This last statement should be qualified more carefully in that we are not deity (Nigel Cameron would certainly agree with this qualification), yet we were created in God’s image.

(3) *God’s created earth was originally good so was different from the world after Adam’s fall, the flood, and Babel.*

Most creationists would agree. The question is how different. Duncan and Hall see a sharp contrast of good then evil, but Ross sees somewhat less of a disjunction.

SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF TWENTY FOUR HOUR DAYS THEORY

(1a) *God created everything ex nihilo.*

³³⁴ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 173.

³³⁵ Ross, “Day-Age View,” in *Genesis*, 126.

³³⁶ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 33. Text states this is from Nigel Cameron, but gives no reference.

We agree. Duncan and Hall say, “God created the world [*ex nihilo*] and is distinct from it (but not unconcerned about it).”³³⁷ “He made everything. But the text also hints at the manner of method of this work: creation *ex nihilo*—out of nothing.”³³⁸

(1b) *The universe is not directly dated by the Bible.*

We agree that the universe is undated by the Bible. Duncan and Hall say, “We take no position on the age of the universe precisely because that question is not directly addressed by the canon.”³³⁹ They are correct in not assigning an age of the universe from Adam’s genealogy because Adam’s genealogy roughly dates Adam, not the universe. But they may only mean that they do not know the date of the relatively recent six days.

(2a) *The six days were normal day-night-cycle days*

We agree. “Compelling exegetical evidence for reading the creation days as anything other than normal days is lacking.”³⁴⁰ Exodus 20:11 affirms that the six days were normal days, consisting of twelve hours of darkness and twelve hours of light.³⁴¹

(2b) *In those six normal days, God spoke in “eight simple commands.”*³⁴² These commands filled a six-part formula: “(1) introductory word (‘Then God said’); (2) creative word (‘let there be’); (3) fulfillment word (‘and it was so’); (4) lordship word (‘God called’); (5) commending word (‘it was good,’ beginning on Day 3); (6) concluding word (‘and there was evening...’).”³⁴³

So I conclude that Duncan and Hall hold many Biblical exegetically supported points. I have suggested a view of miracles on the one hand and mediated processes on the other, and of special revelation versus natural revelation that is between Duncan and Hall on the one side and Ross and Archer on the other.

SUMMARY OF BOTH YOUNG EARTH AND TWENTY FOUR HOUR DAYS VIEWS

If we interpret Exodus 20:11 as if the “*in*” were present and as if *asah* meant “created,” then God must have created everything within the six days. Thus, God could *not* have created the heavens and unfinished planet earth in the beginning before the six days.

³³⁷ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 26.

³³⁸ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 27.

³³⁹ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 22.

³⁴⁰ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 23.

³⁴¹ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 38.

³⁴² Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 31.

³⁴³ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 32.

These six days were consecutive 24-hour day-night cycle days totaling 144 consecutive hours about 6,000 to at the most 10,000 years ago. So God created the heavens as space and earth as chaotic matter throughout space *in* day one. Also in day one, God created temporary light for the first three days. Day one on earth began time for the whole universe. Because God did *not* create the heavens and planet earth in the beginning in Genesis 1:1 before the six days, when God created planet earth is debated—perhaps in day one or day three. In day four God created the universe from chaotic “earth.” In day five God created all aquatic and flying life. In day six God created all land animal life; created Adam, who named all the animal kinds; and God made Eve from Adam. Everything had “appearance of age.”

Almost all fossils were deposited by Noah’s flood, which rose up to cover all mountaintops (low hills?). Since the flood there has been vast orogeny of new high mountain ranges and vast microevolution from the limited “kinds” of land animals, birds, and bats that Adam named and that were on the ark into several times that many species today.

5. THEISTIC BIG BANG THEORY

Genesis and the big bang records Gerald Schroeder’s scientific and spiritual journey from MIT to Jerusalem, from the atomic bomb and the big bang to the Talmud. He sees in both cosmology and Genesis a development of the universe in definable stages from chaos to cosmos. And he calls for a return to חַסֵּד (hesed), the loving-kindness of the omnipotent Creator revealed in the Torah. As a Hebrew speaker, he has some unusual insights into the Torah.

In *Genesis and the big bang* Schroeder works *backward* in time going back to Adam and then back through the six days and finally back to the beginning. Therefore, I have listed his claims going back in time. Readers who are used to Genesis 1 that starts at the beginning, then is followed by day one, then the second day, etc., will need to *reverse that order* to follow Schroeder’s thinking. Schroeder works from the present back to the beginning.

PREUNDERSTANDINGS OF SCHROEDER’S THEISTIC BIG BANG THEORY

Before considering Gerald Schroeder’s claims about creation, we should mention his hermeneutical preunderstanding.

(0) *Cabalistic interpretation and science reveal truth.* Gerald Schroeder comes from two traditions: the Talmud combined with cabala, and science. From his Talmud tradition, Gerald Schroeder holds a problematic hermeneutical approach, that “a single biblical passage [may] have many meanings.”³⁴⁴ He sees “the entire Torah as a poem” and believes “the meaning of poems go well beyond the literal text.”³⁴⁵ He sees “*both* literal and interpretive meanings.”³⁴⁶ Although he has some valuable insights, such as the improbability of chance being the cause of the universe and life, he sometimes uses his cabalistic multiple-and-nonliteral-meanings interpretive method that is, I believe, too unrestrained by the semantics and grammar of the text. As a scientist of note, he would use the principle of reproducibility in his experiments. Therefore it seems strange that he uses this *unreproducible* cabalistic exegesis rather than using the relatively reproducible linguistic grammatical exegesis approach by which we normally read texts, whether a scientific journal, a history book, a newspaper, or the Bible.

CLAIMS OF SCHROEDER’S THEISTIC BIG BANG THEORY

Schroeder works backwards from the present to the big bang. Here are his claims about creation starting with today’s time and working back to the beginning:

(1) *Since Adam, the Bible uses a normal human timeframe demonstrated to be accurate by archeology.* The accuracy of the Bible’s chronology since Adam is confirmed by archeology. The archeology of Hazor fits the Biblical chronology.³⁴⁷ “Genesis attributes the start of sophisticated forging of copper and brass to Tuval-Caine, the son of Lemech (Gen. 4:22). This was some seven hundred years after Adam, or about five thousand years ago.” This Bible time correlates with “the start of the Bronze Age at five thousand years before the present, just as does the Bible calendar.”³⁴⁸ Before the flood “conditions on Earth favored long life,”³⁴⁹ which fits the longer life spans listed. The Bible chronology back to Adam fits

³⁴⁴ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 18; quoting the Talmud commentary on Jeremiah 23:29. I disagree with this comment from the Talmud because if there are many meanings then there is no meaning. And if there is no meaning, then meaningful communication ceases.

³⁴⁵ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 21.

³⁴⁶ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 20.

³⁴⁷ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 53.

³⁴⁸ Schroeder, *Science*, 130-131.

³⁴⁹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 32.

our earth time frame. So since Adam, “the Bible adopts this Earthly [time] perspective.”³⁵⁰ Adam lived roughly 6,000 years ago.³⁵¹ After Adam, we and the Bible have used a human timeframe of normal days and years from a human perspective.

(2) *Before Adam were six days of “stretched time” by relativistic time dilation, so the six days were each 24 hour days on God’s clock while billions of years to us.* “The period extending from ‘the beginning’ to Adam” involved “stretched time. This is the heart of the matter.” “How are we to stretch six days to encompass 15 billion years? Or the reverse, how do we squeeze 15 billion years into six days?”³⁵² “The suggestion is not as absurd as it may at first appear. In the Psalms of David we read, ‘A thousand years in Your eyes are as a day that passes’ (Ps. 90:4).” “Deep within Psalm 90, there is the truth of a physical reality: the six days of Genesis actually did contain the billions of years of the cosmos even while the days remained twenty-four-hour days.”³⁵³

“This verse in Psalms is reminiscent of the dilation of time dealt with in Einstein’s revolutionary thought experiments.” “A billion years . . . can indeed pass for days.” “Einstein’s theory is no longer a theory.”³⁵⁴ “The difference in perceived time is called relativistic time dilation, the dilation that makes the first six days of Genesis reassuringly compatible with the 15 billion years of cosmology.”³⁵⁵ Schroeder bases this conclusion on Einstein’s discovery that “the rate at which time passes is not the same at all places”³⁵⁶ because the rate time passes in each place is based on the velocity and gravity of that place. It is “*impossible* for a common [time] reference frame to have existed between the Creator and each part of the mix of matter” because “time differs from place to place.”³⁵⁷

So before Adam, there was “stretched time,” but now “the Bible adopts this Earthly [time] perspective, but only for times after Adam.”³⁵⁸ “Until Adam appeared on day six, God alone was watching the clock. And that is the key.”³⁵⁹

³⁵⁰ Schroeder, *Science*, 58.

³⁵¹ Schroeder, *Science*, 45. He uses the cabalistic year 5757 in 1996.

³⁵² Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 33.

³⁵³ Schroeder, *Science*, 43.

³⁵⁴ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 34.

³⁵⁵ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 44.

³⁵⁶ Schroeder, *Science*, 47.

³⁵⁷ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 50.

³⁵⁸ Schroeder, *Science*, 58.

³⁵⁹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 49.

“In the first six days of our universe’s existence, the Eternal clock saw 144 hours pass.” The Bible “is truly referring to six 24-hour days.”³⁶⁰ “From a biblical perspective the six days of Genesis include the fifteen billion years we earthbound mortals estimate to be the span of time since the beginning of time, just as a watch in the night might include a thousand years [Ps. 90:4].”³⁶¹ So God was using His time, not earth time, and by His time 144 hours passed—six day-night-cycle days. Because earth time does not necessarily apply elsewhere “six days in God’s space-time reference frame and 15 billion years in ours” are one and the same.³⁶²

(2a) *The universe really is about fifteen billions of years old.* Schroeder unhesitatingly claims that the universe really is about fifteen billion years old in our earth time as proven by red shift of light. Light travels at about “300 million meters per second in a vacuum.” We know from the red shift of light from distant stars how fast they are expanding away from us and that expansion is relative to distance, giving us an approximate distance to the farthest visible objects of over twelve billion light years away. So that light took over twelve billion years to reach us from those retreating stars in our expanding universe. “The implication is that our universe is expanding and has been expanding for some fifteen billion years”³⁶³ and, therefore, is about fifteen billion years old. Thus in God’s time from the big bang until Adam, six days passed even if we would understand it in earth time as about fifteen billion years.

(2b) *The six days were day-night-cycle twenty-four hour days, not day-ages or eras.* The six days were “truly referring to six 24-hour days.”³⁶⁴ Schroeder emphatically disagrees with Ross and all other day-age or long-day advocates. Schroeder explains, “The approach that ‘the six days were really six epochs’ has scant biblical basis.” “Modern students of the Bible might prefer that the days of Genesis be epochs. That would accommodate the findings of cosmology and paleontology in a cursory reading of Genesis.”³⁶⁵ Concerning his rejection of the claim of יוֹם (yôm, “day”) meaning six day-ages, we should give weight to Schroeder, who lives in Israel, speaks Hebrew, and studies the Genesis text in Hebrew as a

³⁶⁰ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 53.

³⁶¹ Schroeder, *Science*, 42-43.

³⁶² Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 92.

³⁶³ Schroeder, *Science*, 54-55.

³⁶⁴ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 53.

³⁶⁵ Schroeder, *Science*, 43.

living language. As I understand it, Ross, when he wrote his claim, did not read Hebrew, so Schroeder weighs in heavily against Ross's main claim.

(2c) *All six days (fifteen billion years) work on a big universe were needed for human life.* “The Bible describes the day-by-day development of our universe in the six days following the creation”³⁶⁶ (emphasis added). Schroeder claims that “day” one and probably the second “day” passed before earth even existed, so those “days” were the deep time of changes solely in the universe. Only the last four or five “days” involved changes on planet earth. The changes needed after the formation of hydrogen and helium in the big bang required all six days (fifteen billion years) to actually make the present universe and planet suitable for life on earth.³⁶⁷ One must ask how Schroeder could reconcile his claim that earth was not present during the first two days with the description of very specifically earth as $\text{וְהָאָרֶץ תִּהְיֶה בִּדְהִיָּה}$ (*tōhû v^ābōhû*, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) in Genesis 1:2 before day one.

(2d) *Each day going back in time was progressively longer.* Schroeder claims that the sixth day lasted about “¼ billion years” and that each previous day doubled in length. So the fifth day lasted about “½ billion years,” the fourth day about “1 billion years,” the third day about 2 billion years, the second day about 4 billion years, and day one about “8 billion years,” all because of time dilation.³⁶⁸

(3) *The sixth back through the third day apply to earth but the first of the six days applied to the universe beginning with the big bang.* “During the development of the universe and prior to the appearance of mankind, God had not yet established a close association with the Earth. For the first one or two days of the six days of Genesis, the Earth didn't even exist!”

(3a) *By the end of the quarter billion years of the sixth day in which God made land animal life, God had made man physically, then he separated Adam and Eve from Cro-Magnon by creating in them his spiritual image.* God made Adam in His image, different from animal life. Schroeder says, “The root of the Hebrew word ‘image’ . . . is ‘shadow,’ ”³⁶⁹

³⁶⁶ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 53.

³⁶⁷ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 90-92.

³⁶⁸ Schroeder, *Science*, 60.

³⁶⁹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 152; Actually, “Shadow” is listed as the second meaning. The first meaning in New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis is “statue, model, image,” VanGemeren, Vol. 3, (H7512).

a nonphysical resemblance. Schroeder says that this shadow was man's spirit, which is a nonphysical shadow-emulation of God. Schroeder adds that this spirit differentiated the Adamic race from ancient non-image-bearing *Homo sapiens*. Maimonides explains, "In the time of Adam . . . there co-existed animals that appeared as humans in shape and also in intelligence but *lacked the 'image'* that makes man uniquely different from other animals, being as the 'image' of God."³⁷⁰ Schroeder uses the modern name for these animals, Cro-Magnon, physically essentially identical to the Adamic race. Schroeder claims that Cro-Magnon were not image-bearers, but *hominid* physical humans from whom Adam descended physically. They were not image-bearing physical/spiritual descendents of Adam.

Schroeder suggests that we consider Adam and Eve to have been "made" physically by God as descendents born to Cro-Magnons, the matter of their bodies being the dust of the ground. But Adam and Eve were "created" spiritually uniquely in the image of God.

(3b) *Sea and land animal life appeared in the roughly half billion years of day five and quarter billion years of day six.* "The Bible records that animal life appeared in the waters on day five and on the dry land on day six."³⁷¹ This sea and land animal life of days five and six was preserved in fossils—first in prokaryotic single-celled life for 2.5 billion years, then eukaryotes dominated for 600 million years. Then came flat pancake-like multicellular life for 300 million years. Day five included the Cambrian explosion of all the major phyla of life and ended with the Permian-Triassic mass extinction about a quarter billion years ago. Then came the age of the dinosaurs. Day six included the K-T extinction of the dinosaurs from which catastrophe small mammals survived. "Thus began the mammalian era in which we live." The sixth day continued producing larger mammals and on "toward the desired goal of a sentient, intelligent being able to absorb within it the amazing concept of ethical monotheism."³⁷²

Each mass extinction provided new niches that were filled with new forms of life. Both the causes of extinctions and the design of the DNA codes seem to have happened too "just right" to have been the product of pure chance, the alternative being that they were guided by the Deity of the Hebrew Bible to the present life forms.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 151; from Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed*, part 1, chapter 7.

³⁷¹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 132.

³⁷² Gerald L. Schroeder, *The Science of God* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997), 99.

³⁷³ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 144-146.

(3c) *Earth's clouded atmosphere blocked out luminaries but not diffuse sunlight until the fourth day.* Schroeder explains,

Resolution of the conflict is found in the use of the word *luminaries* rather than *light* in Genesis 1:14. Prior to the appearance of abundant plant life, the Earth's atmosphere was probably clouded with vapors of the primeval atmosphere. This would be in accord with information relayed from Soviet and U.S. spacecraft investigating the cloudy atmosphere of Venus. There was light on the third day, in the sense that the atmospheric vapors transmitted radiant energy. The atmosphere, however, was translucent, not transparent. Therefore, individual luminaries were not distinguishable. It was this diffuse light that provided energy for the initial plant life.³⁷⁴

Then "the early plant life actually helped clear the atmosphere through the process of photosynthesis."³⁷⁵

(3d) *After earth was formed on the third day, plant life was earth's first life.*

Schroeder says that the first microscopic and then macroscopic plant life was in the oceans protected from UV radiation until those plants produced enough oxygen by photosynthesis to result in ozone in the atmosphere so plants could migrate to land. This earlier microscopic life was not mentioned by Moses. Schroeder explains that after earth was formed on the third day, this early photosynthetic life changed the atmosphere resulting in the air becoming transparent in the fourth day.³⁷⁶

(3e) *Supernovas on the second day were needed for the elements of our atmosphere and water and for even heavier element for our solid planet on the third day.* Schroeder explains that the early high-energy universe expanded and cooled, but it was made almost exclusively of the elements hydrogen and helium. The universe required supernovas over billions of years to provide the heavy elements of oxygen and nitrogen for our atmosphere (second day) and for carbon as the ideal element needed to form life, including humans and other heavier elements for planet earth (third day). So all the medium and heavy elements needed to form our planet on which life would exist came from these supernovas in the billions of years of the first through third days.

³⁷⁴ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 130.

³⁷⁵ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 130.

³⁷⁶ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 129-133.

(3f) *Evening and morning was the progression from chaos to cosmos.* Schroeder claims that “and there was evening and there was morning” was the change from disorder to order instead of the day-evening-night-morning cycles following the first light to rotating earth’s surface.³⁷⁷ So his claim of a day-night-cycle יום (yôm, “day”) had no evening or morning because that was not the meaning of evening and morning.

(3g) *After the inflation, light formed as God’s act in day one.* “When the temperature [of the inflating big bang] fell below 3000° K, a critical event occurred: Light separated from matter and emerged from the darkness of the universe.” Then Schroeder quotes, “And God said, ‘Let there be light.’”³⁷⁸ Schroeder claims that day one began with the big bang and the formation of light shortly after the big bang.

(3h) *Day one in Hebrew was ordinal but the second through sixth days were cardinal.* Schroeder explains that day one was actually the beginning of measured time so was literally day one. Day did not exist before that. Day one could not be correctly expressed as the “first day” in a sequence after some previous day because there was no previous day. If I may use an example from my life to clarify Schroeder’s explanation of the Hebrew, I could say that after my granddaughter’s birth about midnight, the next morning on day one she smiled. “Day one” means there was *no previous day* for her because there was no day and night to her when she was inside the womb.

Back to Genesis 1, there was no day previous to day one so day one could not be called the “first day.” If I were to refer to my granddaughter’s “first day” out of the hospital, that assumes she spent previous days in the hospital’s maternity ward. Ordinal expresses sequence. Day second expresses sequence because it followed day one, and day third followed day second, etc. English translation readers do not always recognize this important understanding that no day preceded day one, because the ordinal and cardinal are not always translated properly from the Hebrew. Schroeder, perhaps with justifiable pride, points out that the Jewish Publications Society translation of 1917 is one of the few English versions that correctly translates the phrase as “day one” instead of “first day.”³⁷⁹ (Also the New American Standard Bible and the Young’s Literal Translation correctly render the phrase as “day one.”) This recognition of the change from cardinal to ordinal numbering of the days in

³⁷⁷ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 93, 156.

³⁷⁸ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 88.

³⁷⁹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 58.

the Hebrew is an important contribution from Schroeder who is a Hebrew as well as an English speaker.

(3i) *Just after the big bang the universe inflated greatly as the “wind of God” of Genesis 1:2c.* In a cabalistic-type interpretation, Schroeder equates the רוח אלהים (*rûah 'elōhîm*; “Spirit of God, breath/wind of God”) with the inflationary stage of the universe suggested by Alan Guth.³⁸⁰

(3j) *Darkness characterized the initial expansion in keeping with Genesis 1:2b.* Schroeder goes on to equate “darkness on the face of the deep” with a onetime inflationary black hole before light began.³⁸¹ “The Bible reveals a similar account. At the creation, we are told, the universe was dark.”³⁸²

Contra Schroeder, the Bible reveals that darkness was “on the face of the deep” which we may understand as the primordial ocean that covered earth.

(3k) *Tōhû and bōhû and darkness of Genesis 1:2a are consistent with the initial state of the universe.* Schroeder claims that the $t\bar{o}h\hat{u} v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\hat{u}$ condition was the initial state of the very early universe because “hydrogen and helium” had not yet formed immediately after the big bang began.³⁸³ Thus Schroeder claim that the $t\bar{o}h\hat{u} v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\hat{u}$ state applied to the initial universe, not to planet earth as the text indicates.

(3l) *The big bang matches the beginning of the universe declared in Genesis 1:1.* The Bible tells us that the heavens and earth were created at a definite beginning and science tells us the same. Schroeder claims that the beginning was the big bang involving energy becoming mass. The “interchangeability between energy and mass is discussed eloquently by Stephen Weinberg in his book *The First Three Minutes* and by Nahmanides (1194–1270) in his *Commentary on Genesis*. Both refer to the mass-energy duality in their descriptions of the very early universe.”³⁸⁴ According to Schroeder, science and Nahmanides agree that before the big bang/beginning of the universe, time and space did not exist. Rabbi Nahmanides taught that the Bible describes the beginning of the universe as the size of a grain of a mustard seed. Science calls the beginning speck, the “singularity.” Schroeder even sees the same ten dimensions, six contracted and four measurable immediately after the beginning

³⁸⁰ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 93-94.

³⁸¹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 93-94.

³⁸² Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 156.

³⁸³ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 49.

³⁸⁴ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 40.

both in Nahmanides' comments on the Bible and in science.³⁸⁵ And the Bible as commented upon by Rabbi Nahmanides teaches over 2000 years beforehand the expansion of the universe that was discovered by Edwin Hubble in 1929.³⁸⁶ The discovery by Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson at the Bell Labs in 1964 of the cosmic background radiation in all directions left over from the big bang is further scientific evidence for this beginning and expansion of the universe.³⁸⁷ Moreover, the density of the universe is “only 10 to 20 percent of the matter required to cause the eventual contraction of the universe exists. What this means is . . . there was only one big bang.” The universe had a beginning; it will *not* contract into a “big crunch” only to explode again and again on and on forever. Since the universe had only one beginning. That means it had “a Beginner.”³⁸⁸

(3m) *The heavens and earth were created from nothing in Genesis 1:1.* “The creation of the heavens and the earth from absolute nothing is at the root of biblical faith.” Schroeder explains that אִבְרָאָה (bārā', “create”) is the only Hebrew word that can specifically indicate “creation of something from nothing.”³⁸⁹ The God of the Hebrew Bible created the heavens and the earth out of nothing.

(3n) *The “beginning” was the beginning of time and matter at the big bang.* “Time truly takes hold when matter forms.” “That transition from energy to stable matter occurred 0.00001 seconds after the big bang.” Radiant energy such as light “does not experience the flow of time.” “Time, as we experience it, is totally related to the material world.”³⁹⁰

(4) *The universe fit for life and life itself were created by a Designer, not by random chance.* Life on earth, particularly human life, is the result of design by a Designer.

(4a) *The universe was designed specifically for human life.* The universe and its laws were designed precisely for life, specifically for human life. The “flow of life [has been] channeled by laws inherent to the universe.” “These constraints are not by chance.”³⁹¹

Professor Weinberg is an avowed skeptic but even he agrees . . . , ‘Life as we know it would be impossible if any one of several physical quantities had slightly different values

³⁸⁵ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 59; Now scientists suggest there may be 11.

³⁸⁶ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 74.

³⁸⁷ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 74.

³⁸⁸ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 78-79.

³⁸⁹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 62.

³⁹⁰ Schroeder, *Science*, 56.

³⁹¹ Schroeder, *Science*, 12.

mathematical estimates state that there simply was not enough time for random reactions to get life going as fast as the fossil record shows that it did.”⁴⁰⁰

Schroeder explains that earth’s crust cooled “some 4.5 billion years ago,” and the first sedimentary rock formed only “3.8 billion years ago,” but then the “earliest evidence of life is dated less than 500 million years” later. “To reach the probable condition that a single protein might have developed by chance, we would need 10^{110} trials to have been completed each second since the start of time! To carry out these concurrent trials, the feed stock of the reactions would require 10^{90} grams of carbon. But the entire mass of the Earth (all elements combined) is only 6×10^{27} grams. In fact the 10^{90} exceeds by many billion time the estimated mass of the entire universe.”⁴⁰¹ And life requires a large number of very specific proteins all at the same time. Moreover, the time available is not “since the beginning of time” but only “500 million years.” Schroeder concludes, “It is statistically . . . essentially impossible that random events produced this life in such a relatively short time.”⁴⁰² Life was designed and that design was precisely implemented by the Designer.

(4d) *Darwinian gradualism and fossil record of abrupt species do not match.*

“Ironically, it is the fossil record itself that is gradually dispelling the argument by chance.”⁴⁰³ The fossil record shows abrupt changes in species, not gradual continual transitions. “The statement Darwin repeats several times in *Origin of Species*, ‘*natura non facit saltum*’—that nature does not make jumps—is simply false. Transitional forms are totally absent from the fossil record at the basic level of phylum and rare if present at all in class.”⁴⁰⁴ “A life form appears. There may be changes within the form, but its basic structure remains until it disappears and a new, different structure arises in its place, *suddenly*.”⁴⁰⁵ Schroeder then quotes Niles Eldredge: “The fossil record we were told to find for the past 120 years [since Darwin] does not exist.”⁴⁰⁶ Life was guided and transformed by the Deity of

⁴⁰⁰ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 19.

⁴⁰¹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 113.

⁴⁰² Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 112.

⁴⁰³ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 111.

⁴⁰⁴ Schroeder, *Science*, 10.

⁴⁰⁵ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 135.

⁴⁰⁶ B. Rensberger, “Recent Studies Spark Revolution in Interpretation of Evolution,” *New York Times*, November 4, 1980, C3, quoting Eldredge and in turn quoted by Schroeder, *Science*, 10.

the Hebrew Torah. Schroeder's answer is "a divinely inspired teleology, or purposeful goal."⁴⁰⁷

(4e) *Behind all is the God of the Hebrew Torah.* Schroeder believes the precisely designed laws of the universe, the development of life, and the human race were designed by an "infinitely powerful Creator" Whom he takes as the "biblical God" who set the laws in motion but who does not need to exercise intimate detailed constant oversight.⁴⁰⁸ His view is somewhat reminiscent of deism, although he sees God intervening as He sees fit, for example in the flood because of human wickedness.

(4f) *The Bible carefully studied and the creation agree.* "With a superficial reading of Genesis [even in Hebrew], and certainly with a superficial reading of the text in translation, we haven't a prayer of understanding the details."⁴⁰⁹ Schroeder concludes that with a thorough study of the Hebrew text we can understand what the Bible says about the creation events. Then science will come to agree with a correct understanding of the Bible. "Science, through its progressively improved understanding of the world, has come to agree with theology."⁴¹⁰

PROBLEMATIC CLAIMS OF THE THEISTIC BIG BANG THEORY

(0) *Cabalistic interpretation and science reveal truth.* Gerald Schroeder has some interesting and sometimes helpful insights into the Hebrew Bible. Also we may appreciate his spiritual journey from a scientist opposed to any idea of a Creator to a seeker after the Creator God in the Hebrew Bible. But we may be concerned at his use of cabalistic type interpretation.

One of the hermeneutical practices is reproducibility. Cabalistic interpretation of multiple meanings is inherently unreproducible. As a scientist, he should know that research should be reproducible. Non-linguistic-based interpretation is not reproducible because it is only loosely restrained by the text. Reproducible exegesis is a hallmark of correct procedure. This hermeneutical fault undercuts somewhat the value of Schroeder's work.

⁴⁰⁷ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 136.

⁴⁰⁸ Schroeder, *Science*, 12-13.

⁴⁰⁹ Schroeder, *Science*, 18.

⁴¹⁰ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 160.

(2) *Before Adam there were six days of “stretched time” by relativistic time dilation so the six days were each twenty-four hour days on God’s clock, while billions of years to us.* Schroeder states, “The period extending from ‘the beginning’ to Adam” involved “stretched time. This is the heart of the matter.” He then quotes Psalm 90:4: “A thousand years in Your eyes are as a day that passes.” He then claims, “Deep within Psalm 90, there is the truth of a physical reality: the six days of Genesis actually did contain the billions of years of the cosmos even while the days remained twenty-four-hour days.”⁴¹¹ “The difference in perceived time is called relativistic time dilation, the dilation that makes the first six days of Genesis reassuringly compatible with the 15 billion years of cosmology.”⁴¹²

However, Psalm 90:4 speaks of God’s eternity compared to earth days. To make that comparison he mentions day and night. For the comparison to have any meaning the day and night had to have been our earth time for humans. Day and night *were on the rotating earth* (because day and night do not function in space). The “thousand years” indicate God’s eternity, that God is not restricted by time. When discussing the six days on earth with evening and morning the author of Genesis is not talking about God’s eternity as is the author of Psalm 90, but six earth days. The six earth days were not fifteen billion years or even 4.5 billion years on earth, which would have been over a trillion days on earth, not six days on earth. Besides, the time could not have been fifteen billion years of God’s time, because the very point of Psalm 90 is that God is not restricted by time—relativistically stretched or not.

Schroeder claims that the last four or five days were on planet earth. But if they were earth days, they would have been measured in earth time, by daylight ending in evening then night ending in morning, not “God time.” So even by his view the time measurement at least after the first two days was earth time, not some kind of universal “God-time.” Planet earth remains quite constant in velocity and gravity so relativistic time dilation is inconsequential on earth. Therefore, the day-night-cycle days of earth time were not effected by relativity enough to change those six days measured by daylight, evening, nighttime, and morning into “days” measured in billions of years.

⁴¹¹ Schroeder, *Science*, 43.

⁴¹² Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 44.

Schroeder claims that the time of the six days could not have been earth time “because for the first two of those six days there was no Earth.”⁴¹³ So “we must identify the universal perspective of the Bible’s space-time reference frame for those educative [tending to educate or develop], six pre-Adam days.”⁴¹⁴

I agree that the Bible does *not* give a space-time reference during “the beginning.” If the big bang and inflation occurred, they were during “the beginning,” which is not measured by the Bible in earth time. However, in Genesis 1:2 the focus switches to “And the earth was.” The six days only start in Genesis 1:3 on earth (nothing is said in the context of Genesis 1:3 that indicates the inflationary epoch of the big bang). Day one begins in Genesis 1:3 on the rotating earth, at an unspecified time after “the beginning.” The six days are about the transformation of planet earth starting with light to earth’s dark sea. So the six days were measured by day and night on earth as normal earth days.

We may appreciate Schroeder’s desire to remain faithful to the contextual meaning of יום (yôm, “day”) as a normal day-night cycle day, but we may express concern over his insistence that the days measured billions of years in the universe on God’s clock rather than day-night cycle days on planet earth.

(2d) *Each day going back in time was progressively longer.* Schroeder claims that the sixth day lasted about “¼ billion years” and that each previous day doubled in length.⁴¹⁵

However, it seems Schroeder’s first figure of “¼ billion years” was arbitrarily selected *ad hoc* to arrive at his total of about “15¾ billion years” for close to Schroeder’s suggested age of the universe. The series seems convenient for Schroeder’s theory, but I see no Hebrew Bible text basis for this claim.

(3) *The beginning of the six days goes back to the universe beginning with the big bang.* Schroeder applies days one and two to the universe, not to planet earth. “During the development of the universe and prior to the appearance of mankind, God had not yet established a close association with the Earth. For the first one or two days of the six days of Genesis, the Earth didn’t even exist!”

⁴¹³ Schroeder, *Science*, 51.

⁴¹⁴ Schroeder, *Science*, 50.

⁴¹⁵ Schroeder, *Science*, 60.

Unfortunately, some more extreme young earth creationists also have picked up on this idea and apply תֹּהוּ וּבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû), “light,” and the “waters which were above the firmament” of the first two days to the universe.

The error in the above is obvious. Genesis 1:2 declares that earth, pointedly not the heavens and the earth, was *tohu vbohu* and its deep sea surface dark. Then when God commanded light, He separated between the light and the darkness and called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” Night and day are functions of a rotating planet, not space. Both Henry Morris and I strongly agree that day and night necessitate our rotating planet. Morris states, “Light rays were impinging on the earth as it rotated on its axis during the first three days.”⁴¹⁶ Daytime and nighttime of day one were brought about by planet earth being lighted on one side as it rotated in that light. Day one was not the light of the big bang at the beginning of the universe as Schroeder claims.

(3b) *Sea and land animal life appeared in the roughly half billion years of day five and the quarter billion years of day six.* “The Bible records that animal life appeared in the waters on day five and on the dry land on day six.”⁴¹⁷ Schroeder claims that day five included the Cambrian explosion of all the major phyla of life and ended with the Permian-Triassic mass extinction about a quarter billion years ago. Day six included the age of the dinosaurs, the K-T extinction of the dinosaurs, and the subsequent age of mammals.

He fails to mention that flyers were created on the fifth day. But no birds, bats, or even pterosaurs existed before the last quarter billion years, although flying paleoptera insects are dated by the evolutionary paradigm to before three hundred million years ago.

(3f) *Evening and morning was the progression from chaos to cosmos.* Schroeder claims that “and there was evening and there was morning” was the change from disorder to order.

We may respond that evening is associated with nighttime and morning with daytime starting in day one, and both are associated with a numbered day. These are time words not chaos words. Since Schroeder speaks Hebrew and is a scientist, one would expect a Hebrew exegetical basis for עֶרֶב (*erev*, “evening”) supposedly meaning a state of disorder and בֹּקֶר (*bōqer*, “morning”) a state of order. No such Hebrew exegetical basis was given.

⁴¹⁶ Morris, *Record*, 65.

⁴¹⁷ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 132.

(3g) *After the inflation, light formed as God's act on day one.* “When the temperature [of the inflating big bang] fell below 3000° K, a critical event occurred: Light separated from matter and emerged from the darkness of the universe.” Then Schroeder quotes, “And God said, ‘Let there be light.’”⁴¹⁸ Schroeder claims that day one began with the big bang and the formation of light shortly after the big bang.

Schroeder fails to address Genesis 1:2 restricting the discussion to planet earth so the light on day one was light to the darkened earth, resulting in day and night (so strongly implying that the planet was rotating), not light at the beginning of the big bang. An expanding sphere of light just after the big bang could not have had day and night.

(3i) *Just after the big bang, the universe inflated greatly as the “wind of God” of Genesis 1:2c.* Schroeder equates the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים (rûah 'elôhîm; “Spirit of God”) with the inflationary stage of the universe suggested by Alan Guth.⁴¹⁹

This interpretation, along with his interpretation of evening and morning as progress from disorder to order and his interpretation of “darkness on the face of the deep” as the initial black hole in the singularity, seem to be cabalistic-type interpretations that go far beyond the grammatical interpretation that honors the author's text. How could Moses possibly have meant the “inflationary stage of the universe” by רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים (rûah) or the initial “black hole in the singularity” by חֹשֶׁךְ (khōshek; “darkness, obscurity”)? This is a semantic anachronism.

PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF THEISTIC BIG BANG

(2b) *The six days were literal twenty-four-hour days, not day-ages or eras.* We may not agree with Schroeder's stretched time from relativity, but the issue here is what the Bible text means by יוֹם (yôm, “day”).

Schroeder claims that the Hebrew Bible texts indicate that the six days were “truly referring to six 24-hour days.”⁴²⁰ Schroeder emphatically disagrees with Ross and all other day-age or long-day advocates. Schroeder explains, “The approach that ‘the six days were

⁴¹⁸ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 88.

⁴¹⁹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 93-94.

⁴²⁰ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 53.

really six epochs' has scant biblical basis." "Modern students of the Bible might prefer that the days of Genesis be epochs. That would accommodate the findings of cosmology and paleontology in a cursory reading of Genesis."⁴²¹ Schroeder lives in Israel, speaks Hebrew, and studies the Genesis text in Hebrew as a living language. So Schroeder's claim that there is "scant biblical basis" for day-ages must be taken very seriously.

*SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF THEISTIC BIG BANG*⁴²²

(1) *Since Adam, the Bible uses a normal human time frame demonstrated to be accurate by archeology.*

I agree. Substantial evidence supports Schroeder's claim. For example, "The early Bronze Age coincided with Tubal-Cain's lifetime, the biblical inventor of bronze tools."⁴²³ We must remember that Gerald Schroeder lives in Israel, where many of the actual archeological finds are occurring. I participated in such an archeological dig (Tiberius) and saw our finds published in Israel. Almost every month of the digging season (the dry season) it seems that a new find confirms the Biblical data. Outsiders may scoff, but I personally did not find any scoffers who actually dug. The Bible and the digs match far too precisely to discount Bible history as fable or myth.

(3c) *Earth's clouded atmosphere blocked out luminaries but not diffuse sunlight until the fourth day.*

"Resolution of the conflict is found in the use of the word *luminaries* rather than *light* in Genesis 1:14. Prior to the appearance of abundant plant life, the Earth's atmosphere was probably clouded with vapors of the primeval atmosphere. . . . The atmospheric vapors transmitted radiant energy. The atmosphere, however, was translucent, not transparent. Therefore, individual luminaries were not distinguishable."⁴²⁴ Schroeder's concise analysis is cogent and fits the Hebrew text. However, I would not use the word "distinguishable" as matching any Biblical word for the fourth day.

(3h) *Day one in Hebrew was ordinal, but the second through sixth days cardinal.*

⁴²¹ Schroeder, *Science*, 43.

⁴²² I am not saying that I agree with everything the author says on this claim, but that on the whole these claims seem supported by Scripture.

⁴²³ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 32.

⁴²⁴ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 130.

Schroeder is correct in this claim. It can be checked easily in the Hebrew text and with Hebrew grammar. Day one was actually the day-night cycle number one on earth, so it was literally day one. In contrast, ordinal expresses sequence. Day second is expressing sequence because it followed day one, and day third followed day second, etc. This change from cardinal to ordinal may be very significant.

(3m) *The heavens and earth were created from nothing in Genesis 1:1.*

“The creation of the heavens and the earth from absolute nothing is at the root of biblical faith.” Schroeder explains that $\aleph \square \daleth \daleth$ (*bārā'*, create) is the only Hebrew word that can specifically indicate “creation of something from nothing.”⁴²⁵ We agree that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. We agree that $\aleph \square \daleth \daleth$ (*bārā'*) has a special creation meaning.

(4) *The universe fit for life and life itself were created by a Designer, not by chance.*

We agree that life on earth, particularly human life, is the result of design by our Creator. Schroeder gives much specific scientific evidence for the fine-tuning of the universe, planet earth, and life.

(4d) *Darwinian gradualism and the fossil record of abrupt species do not match.*

I may not agree with all Schroeder says on the subject of evolution, but we may agree that “ironically, it is the fossil record itself that is gradually dispelling the argument by chance.”⁴²⁶ The fossil record shows abrupt changes in species, not gradual continual transitioning. “The statement Darwin repeats several times in *Origin of Species*, ‘*natura non facit saltum*’—that nature does not make jumps—is simply false.”⁴²⁷ “A life form appears. There may be changes within the form, but its basic structure remains until it disappears and a new, different structure arises in its place, *suddenly*.”⁴²⁸ My own study of marine fossil beds in Illinois and Florida seems to confirm this claim. Schroeder’s answer is “a divinely inspired teleology, or purposeful goal.”⁴²⁹ Schroeder concludes that God directed the process toward His goals.

(4f) *The Bible, when carefully studied, and the creation agree.*

⁴²⁵ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 62.

⁴²⁶ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 111.

⁴²⁷ Schroeder, *Science*, 10.

⁴²⁸ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 135.

⁴²⁹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 136.

“With a superficial reading of Genesis [even in Hebrew], and certainly with a superficial reading of the text in translation, we haven’t a prayer of understanding the details.”⁴³⁰ I would not put it that way, but we do need to study the Hebrew Bible very carefully to exegete it correctly. I am concerned that Gerald Schroeder seems to guide his exegesis by science. For example, scientists at the time Schroeder wrote *Genesis and the big bang* said there are ten dimensions, and Schroeder claimed that the Bible agrees with ten dimensions, although he did not give a reference; but now leading astrophysicists claim eleven dimensions. It is dangerous to claim that current science and the Bible agree. Science is errant, so science changes.

In conclusion, I appreciate that Schroeder is on a spiritual journey in the Torah from disbelief in a Creator to belief that there must be a Creator. As a Hebrew speaker, he also has good insights into the Hebrew text. But I am concerned about his cabalistic hermeneutics and some of his conclusions that I suspect are guided more by his science than by Scripture.

SUMMARY OF THE THEISTIC BIG BANG THEORY

Since the time of Adam, the Bible uses a normal human time frame demonstrated to be accurate by archeology. But before Adam were six days that involved “stretched time” by relativistic time dilation. So the six days were each twenty-four-hour days on God’s clock, while billions of years to us. All six days’ (fifteen billion years) work on a big universe were needed for human life. After the big bang and inflation as the “wind of God,” light formed in the early universe on day one. Earth’s clouded atmosphere blocked out luminaries but not diffuse sunlight until the fourth day. The universe and earth fit for life and creation of life was by a Designer, not by random chance. Darwinian gradualism of life begun by chance alone is statistically essentially impossible. In addition, the fossil record of abrupt species does not match Darwinian gradualism. Life originated from the God of the Hebrew torah. On the sixth day God separated Adam and Eve from Cro-Magnon by creating in them His spiritual image. So the Bible, when carefully studied, and the creation agree (concordism).

6. OLD-EARTH DAY-AGE PROGRESSIVE CREATIONISM THEORY (OEC)

⁴³⁰ Schroeder, *Science*, 18.

A number of Christians have advanced the idea that each “day” was a geologic age on earth during which God made earth habitable and progressively created life. Modern proponents include Gleason Archer, Bernard Ramm, and Millard Erickson. Rather than trace the history of this creation theory, I will go directly to its most prolific modern proponent, Hugh Ross.

Hugh Ross records his spiritual pilgrimage as he contemplated the universe and asked the question, “Who did all this?” He found the answer in a Gideon Bible. He realized that the creation events recorded in the Bible “perfectly matched the established record of nature.”⁴³¹ After eighteen months of reading the Bible and not finding “a single provable error or contradiction,” he realized, “Its perfection could come only from the Creator Himself.”⁴³² “After a long evening of studying the salvation passages in the New Testament, I humbled myself before God, asking Him to forgive me of my self-exaltation and all the offenses resulting from it, . . . and received Christ as my Lord and Savior.”⁴³³

Hugh Ross went on to become an astronomer. Breakthroughs in science consistently “made the case for Christianity stronger.”⁴³⁴ As he studied both science and the Bible, he began to develop the case for creation. From his study, he has authored a series of books on the subject and has been asked to lecture at many colleges and seminaries. On the one hand, he has been a wonderful witness to fellow scientists, but unfortunately, on the other hand, he has been heavily criticized by some modern young earth creationists, too often in a less than irenic spirit. I have met Hugh Ross and respect him as a scientist and a Christian who has entered the field of Biblical creation with significant contributions. He is to be honored as a fellow Christian and truth seeker who has made great contributions to creation science, particularly his insights into how precisely the universe was created just right for human life. That I may take a more nuanced view on a couple of points does not lessen my honor to this great Christian astrophysicist. Eminent Old Testament professor Gleason Archer from my seminary alma mater also holds this view. Archer’s academic and professional credits and numerous Semitic languages proficiencies could fill pages. Here are the points of the case, presented forward in time from the big bang until now:

⁴³¹ Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Downers Grove, IL: NavPress, 2001), 18-19.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

(00) *Biblical and true scientific evidence, both correctly interpreted, will agree.* Hugh Ross is highly evidential. He came to Christianity only by careful critical examination of overwhelming evidence that the Bible's claims are true. The first of his two key preunderstandings is examine everything by the evidence. Second, both the Bible and creation have proven to be reliable and both have proven to be from the Creator; so both, when rightly interpreted, will agree. The Bible originated from the Creator because only the Creator could have known before modern science the Biblical claims that correlate precisely with the discoveries of astronomy, astrophysics, cosmology, etc. The universe originated from the Creator because it has been precisely tuned for human life. Ross holds these evidentially; since the evidence is 99.99999+% certain, it is only reasonable to exercise faith for the last .000001%. And he has done just that.

(0) *The Bible with the aid of science tells us accurately what God did; science tells us how He did it.* Dr. Hugh Ross may not realize it, but he is following the lead of Henry Morris in seeing that science tells us how God did what He said in the Bible that He did. However, Hugh Ross goes beyond Morris in seeing a larger role of science in the actual interpretation process. Today many Christians may assume that the Bible tells us accurately what God did and then true science tells us how He did it. But this view has not always been common. Ross quotes the great covenant theologian Herman Bavinck: "This question of the origin of things lies outside of the domain of natural science."⁴³⁵ Both Morris and Ross disagree with this one claim by Bavinck. Morris starts with the Bible and uses science to attempt to prove his interpretation of the Bible's creation events. Ross sees true science as equal to the Bible, both revealing the initial events and both needing interpreting. Morris and fellow young earth creationists run the risk of reverse-historicism by forcing science to conform to their interpretation of the Bible. Ross runs the risk of historicism by the possibility of fudging his interpretation of the Bible toward current science. As far as I can see, both are attempting to be Biblical, but both need to be more careful to let the Bible speak in its own language in its own time by its own authorship.

(1) *Two main claims of the big bang theory correspond to Bible claims—beginning and expansion.* Hugh Ross sees the verse "In the beginning God created the heavens and the

⁴³⁵ Hugh Ross, *The Fingerprint of God* (Orange, CA: Promise Publishing, 1989), 5; quoting Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), viii.

earth” as the Biblical explanation of the cause of the big bang.⁴³⁶ He is not saying that the Bible describes the big bang in modern scientific detail. He is claiming that the two big assertions—the scientific assertion of the big bang, and the Biblical assertion of “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth—agree. First, the universe and time had a definite beginning. He explains that there are two options open to science: an unlimited infinite eternal steady-state universe, which may not require a Creator, or a universe in which the “matter and energy are finite in extent and in time.”⁴³⁷ Since what is actually observed is that the “matter and energy” are “finite in extent and in time,” then the universe had a beginning and the logical cause is an infinite transcendent Creator Who in the beginning created the universe.

Second, the universe has been expanding ever since it was created. Prior to Lemaître and Hubble, the scientific consensus was that the universe was eternal and static, neither expanding nor contracting. The big bang changed all that. Most scientists reluctantly have come to realize that the universe had a beginning. A non-eternal universe must be either expanding or contracting. Scientists almost universally agree that the universe is expanding. Not only are the galaxy clusters becoming farther apart, but space itself is expanding. Long before any scientist proposed a beginning of the universe by the big bang, God declared that the universe had a beginning and is stretching out or expanding.

Also, even today, scientists do not know how the big bang started. The clarion call of Hugh Ross is that God created the matter and energy beginning the universe, because God is the Creator of “in the beginning,” resulting in the “heavens and earth.”

(1a) *The universe had a beginning—the big bang.* Hugh Ross reviewed the star-studded history of the scientists—Albert Einstein, Georges-Henri Lemaître, and Edwin Hubble—who discovered that the universe was expanding and so had a beginning. Then Ross provided several chapters of evidence for the big bang.⁴³⁸ He stated, “All these scientists, however, were upstaged at least 2,500 years earlier by Job, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other Biblical authors. The Bible’s prophets and apostles stated explicitly and repeatedly the two most fundamental properties of the big bang, a transcendent cosmic beginning a finite time period ago and a universe undergoing general, continual expansion. In

⁴³⁶ Ross. *Fingerprint*, 165.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.* 4.

⁴³⁸ Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1993), 31-118.

Isaiah 42:5 both properties were declared: ‘This is what the Lord says—He who created the heavens and stretched them out.’⁴³⁹

(1b) *The big bang’s beginning indicated a transcendent personal Beginner.* “The big bang theory points to a supernatural beginning and a purposeful (hence personal), transcendent (beyond the boundaries of space, time, matter, and energy) Beginner.”⁴⁴⁰

(1c) *The precisely right conditions of the resulting universe, earth, and life indicate the Creator revealed in the Bible.* The fine-tuning of the universe for life, the precise conditions on planet earth for life, and the improbability of life produced by chance all give overwhelming evidence for a Divine Designer—the God of the Bible.⁴⁴¹ God created the physical parameters of the universe precisely for life, including humans, on earth. Ross states, “If the matter and energy are finite in extent and in time, and if the ranges of the parameters for life are narrow, we have potent evidence for a personal Creator, specifically for the God of the Bible.”⁴⁴² He explains that “matter and energy are finite in extent and in time” and that “the ranges of the parameters for life are narrow,” exceedingly narrow. That our universe fits into those exceedingly precise parameters very strongly indicates that it was designed and created by God with the purpose of it sustaining humans.

(1d) *The universe has been expanding since God created it.* The second great property that Lemaître proposed from Einstein’s equations and that Hubble discovered is that the universe is expanding. Eleven Bible texts had already claimed that God is stretching out the heavens long before Hubble. For example, Isaiah 51:13 speaks of “the LORD your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens, And laid the foundations of the earth.” These eleven texts range in time from immediately after the initial creation through the time of Isaiah, indicating that God has been continually stretching out the heavens since its creation. Both the Bible and modern science strongly back Lemaître’s and Ross’s claim. In fact, the cosmic background radiation predicted by the expanding universe model was discovered by George F. Smoot using the COBE satellite just before Lemaître’s death. The connection between the beginning of the universe and the reality of the Creator was not lost on Smoot as he saw the

⁴³⁹ Ross, *Cosmos*, 23-24

⁴⁴⁰ Ross, *Cosmos*, 27.

⁴⁴¹ Ross, *Cosmos*, 145-216.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.* 4.

evidence for the beginning of time and the universe and responded, “Its like looking at God.”⁴⁴³

(2) *Each yôm referred to an era of millions or billions of years.* Hugh Ross and Gleason Archer argue for this idea by a series of claims. In *Creation and Time*, Ross mixes arguments that each day was a long-era with arguments that the universe is old. The two groups of arguments do not prove the same claim, so I have separated them. In several creation theories, the days are normal day-night cycle days, but the age of the universe is undated. Perhaps the reason Hugh Ross mixes the two kinds of arguments is that he may not realize there are alternatives to “long days” for an undated universe that may be old.

(2a) *Yôm referred to God’s days.* Hugh Ross refers to “the length of God’s days,” quoting Psalm 90:4 “For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch [four hours] in the night.” So he transfers this statement explaining that God is not time-bound as we are (context: “Before . . . [the creation], from everlasting to everlasting you are God” [Psalm 90:2c, NIV]) to his claim that the Genesis 1 days lasted “God-day eras of millions or billions of years.”⁴⁴⁴

(2b) *Yôm has a semantic range including an era, allowing day-ages.* Ross gives examples of the semantic range of *yôm* used for longer time periods.⁴⁴⁵ These need not be recounted because there is no argument against the semantic range of *yôm* including times longer than a day. This seems to be Ross’s main argument, yet this argument has little weight, because it is not the extent of the semantic range, but the use of the word in the particular sentence that limits the semantic range to a particular meaning.

(2c) *Ereb and bōqer may possibly be metaphorical.* Ross claims that “evening” may have had “possible metaphoric usage.”⁴⁴⁶ The argument would be that if “evening” were sometime used metaphorically, then “evening” in Genesis 1 would not necessarily have indicated the evening of a daylight-evening-nighttime-morning cycle day. Ross fails to give strong exegetical support for this claim.

(2d) *Yôm with an ordinal number may refer to a time period longer than twenty-four hours.* Ross explains, “Young-earth creationists have argued for twenty-four-hour days on

⁴⁴³ Maugh, Thomas H., II, "Relics of Big Bang, Seen for First Time," *Los Angeles Times*, Friday, April 24, 1992, A1 and A30.

⁴⁴⁴ Hugh Ross, *Creation and Time* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), 45.

⁴⁴⁵ Ross, *Time*, 46-47.

⁴⁴⁶ Ross, *Time*, 46.

the basis that *yôm* when attached to an ordinal (second, third, fourth, etc.) always refers to a twenty-four hour period.” He responds that “it is true only for passages describing days of human activity rather than days of divine activity.” But he claims, “The rules of Hebrew grammar do not require that *yôm* must refer to twenty-four hours, even when attended to an ordinal. Hosea 6:2 prophesies that ‘after two days he [God] will revive us [Israel]; on the third day he will restore us.’ ” He continues, “For centuries Bible commentators have noted that the ‘days’ in this passage (where the ordinal is used) refer to a year, years, a thousand years, or maybe more.”⁴⁴⁷ This is an overstatement, as I shall discuss shortly.

(2e) *The syntax of the yôm sentences is unusual.* Hugh Ross claims that “And was evening and was morning day X” “is clearly a departure from simple and ordinary expression.” However, all he can get out of this argument is that “it does suggest that ‘day’ here is to be taken in some unusual manner.”⁴⁴⁸ But unusual syntax proves nothing about the length of each *yôm*.

(2f) *Sequential chronological Bible statements are intentionally verifiable, but the six days are not unless they are day-ages (or with time between the days).* “Chronologies in the Bible . . . record sequences . . . are significant.” For example, “Daniel 9:24-27 [is] a timetable for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the Messiah’s coming and death, the destruction of Jerusalem, years of desolation, and final restoration.”⁴⁴⁹ Ross lists several other similar chronologies. “The supernatural accuracy of such chronologies not only proves their inspiration, but also gives assurance for today and hope for tomorrow.”⁴⁵⁰

For the creation days, long periods during which increasingly complex life-forms were created are verifiable and useful for validating the supernatural accuracy of the writer’s statements. But if all creation were completed in six 24-hour days, the most sophisticated measuring techniques . . . would be totally incapable of discerning the sequence of events. Thus, a major use of the chronology would be thwarted.

This argument may add some weight to either long day-ages (or equally to time between the days) but does not constitute proof.

⁴⁴⁷ Ross, *Time*, 47.

⁴⁴⁸ Ross, *Time*, 48.

⁴⁴⁹ Ross, “Day-Age View,” 148-149.

⁴⁵⁰ Ross, “Day-Age View,” 149.

(2g) *The events of the sixth yôm were too long to have occurred in twelve hours.* God created Adam. Then God engaged Adam in “lengthy conversation,” instructing “in their responsibilities in managing the planes, animals and resources of the earth.”⁴⁵¹ Then Adam named all the *behemah*, or “livestock”; the *oph hashamayim*, or “flyers of the air”; and all the *chayyah hassadeh*, or “beasts of the field.” These categories would seem to include all land mammals (not sea mammals), numbering about 5,400; all birds, numbering about 10,000 species, and bats (probably not including flying insects), numbering about 1,100 species; and likely the land reptiles as part of the *chayyah hassadeh*, numbering about 8,000 species for a total of about 24,500 species. If we reduce that number by a factor for “kinds,” we may estimate that Adam named 10,000 kinds. If he saw and named each kind in five seconds, that would have totaled 50,000 seconds. Add a couple very brief breaks, and the total comes to about fourteen hours. Kulikovsky’s counter claim that it would have been “a task which could easily have been achieved in a few hours” seems overstated.⁴⁵² Moreover, all this had to have been done in daylight. Eden was probably located in the Middle East close to the Equator, so likely even summer days lasted about thirteen hours. Then Adam determined that he could not find any suitable helper from all these animal kinds. Next he slept, during which time God made Eve. Then Adam spoke eloquently of Eve. All these events would fit a longer period of time better than into the twelve or thirteen hours of one day’s daylight.

(2h) *The seventh yôm had no stated ending.* Ross says, “This distinct change in form for the seventh day strongly suggests that this day has (or had) not yet ended.” God is still at rest from his creative activity. “After the creation of Adam and Eve, however, God ceased from His work of creating new life-forms (the seventh day), and His rest, or ‘cessation,’ continues to this day. (He is still at work in other, providential ways.)”⁴⁵³ Ross claims that if the seventh day is longer, so must have been the previous days.

(2i) *Yôm in Genesis 2:4b was longer than twenty-four hours.* Genesis 2:4b speaks of “In the day the Lord made the heavens and the earth.”⁴⁵⁴ Therefore “day” has a semantic range greater than just a twenty-four-hour day. (But the word used is not יוֹם (yôm, “day”) but יַדְּיּוֹם (b^eyôm, “when,” “in the day”), meaning “when.”)

⁴⁵¹ Ross, *Time*, 50-51.

⁴⁵² Andrew Kulikovsky, “How could Adam have named all the animals in a single day?” *Creation* 27:3 June 2005, 27-28.

⁴⁵³ Ross, *Time*, 49-50.

⁴⁵⁴ Ross, *Time*, 52.

(2j) *The Bible says earth is ancient, so the days must be long.* Habakkuk 3:6 says mountains and hills are ancient. This is of course true, but it does not prove that the days were day-ages, because there are alternative theories with normal days but an older earth.

Hugh Ross claims that the days were long. However, all his arguments for this claim are problematic. He also claims that the universe and earth are old, and his arguments for that claim seem much stronger.

(3) *The six days were sequential.* “The day-age view we advocate not only holds that the days of creation are long periods of time or epochs, but also that they are sequential; that is, that the six epochs revealed in Genesis 1 occurred in the order revealed.”⁴⁵⁵

(3a) *Genesis 1 is full of chronological terms.* Chronological terms include *yôm*, numbered days, continual *vav* consecutive statements such as “And God said,” “And God called,” “morning” and “evening,” and “and it was so,” indicating sequential chronological narrative. “Nowhere else in the Bible do we find such a density of chronological terms.”⁴⁵⁶ Such density of chronological terms can only indicate consecutive narrative.

(3b) *Work-rest pattern indicates chronological sequence.* Six days of work preceded rest in Exodus 20:8–11. The Sabbath occurred sequentially after the work, indicating that the series was sequential.⁴⁵⁷

(4) *The Bible suggests an ancient universe and old earth.* Although Hugh Ross mixes arguments for a long-day or day-age with arguments for an ancient universe and old earth, the two kinds of arguments should be separated. The following are his arguments for an older universe, arguments that seem much more substantial.

(4a) *God’s eternity is illustrated by earth’s ancient age.* God’s eternity is compared (as greater compared to lesser) to the “mountains” and the “foundations” of the earth (Psalm 90:2–6, Proverbs 8:22–31, and Micah 6:2).⁴⁵⁸ The comparison seems truly appropriate only if these earth features were at the time of the writing vastly older than a mere few thousand years, only several lifetimes of men such as Adam and Methuselah.

(4b) *The Bible explicitly states that earth is ancient.* “Habakkuk 3:6 explicitly declares that the mountains are ‘ancient’ and the hills are ‘age-old.’ In 2 Peter 3:5, the

⁴⁵⁵ Ross, “Day-Age View,” 153.

⁴⁵⁶ Ross, “Day-Age View,” 154.

⁴⁵⁷ Ross, “Day-Age View,” 154.

⁴⁵⁸ Ross, *Time*, 52.

heavens (the stars and universe) are said to have existed ‘long ago.’⁴⁵⁹ These long time indicators strongly suggest that the universe would seem to be significantly older than 4,000 years at the time of the writing.

(4c) *The Bible says the universe is vast, which indicates it is ancient.* Repeatedly the Bible calls the stars “countless.” “Hebrew (and Greek) numbering systems included numbers up to the billions.” “Countless” must mean a minimum of “100 billion” stars. So the minimum size of the universe, given “100 billion” stars with the average density of stars, would be “no less than 56,000 light years.” “Since no material in our universe moves more rapidly than the velocity of light, and since the velocity of light must remain constant for life to exist, we can conclude that the biblically stated *minimum* age of the universe is 56,000 years.”⁴⁶⁰ A 4,000-year-old universe at the time of writing, with a radius of light visible only to 4,000 light-years, would have had a tiny fraction of that number of stars, a number easily within the numbering system of the time. The number of stars visible in a 4,000-year-old universe does *not* fit the Biblical term “countless.”

Astronomers estimate that the universe has about 100,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars and is over 13 billion light-years in radius. A radius of 13 billion light-years requires an age of the universe estimated at 13.7 to 15 billion years, because the light from an object 13 billion light-years away apparently took 13 billion years to reach us.⁴⁶¹ This size and approximate number of stars certainly fits the Biblical term “countless.”

(4d) *The creation period was referred to as the “generations of the heavens and the earth.”* Genesis is divided by *tôlê dôt* or statements, “These are the generations of.” In Genesis 2:4 the plural form, *generations*, is used, indicating that multiple generations have passed.⁴⁶² Genesis 2:4a says, “These *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created.” (KJV). These generations in 2:4 refer back to the actual creation in Genesis 1:1 as well as six days. In Genesis, the subsequent *tôlê dôt* division marker statements follow the generations of patriarchs such as Adam and Noah, both living just under a thousand years. So the time length of the generations of “the heavens and the earth” would seem best measured in at least thousands of years, not in 144 hours. And if one combines this

⁴⁵⁹ Ross, *Time*, 52.

⁴⁶⁰ Ross, *Time*, 58.

⁴⁶¹ 6,000-year-old-universe advocates have suggested a variety of problematic answers, but none seems compelling. None has even gained a majority support among 6,000-year-old-universe advocates.

⁴⁶² Ross, *Time*, 52.

concept of generations of the heavens and the earth with the previous antiquity statements about earth, then the generations of the heavens and earth may be very long indeed.

(5) *Theology suggests an older universe, earth, and life.* Hugh Ross calls the following the “theological basis for long creation days.”⁴⁶³ These arguments are based on the nature of God, His Word, and His creation.

(5a) *God does not deceive in either the Bible or the creation.* “Whatever objects of His creation we subject to scientific analysis will reveal their true age—provided the analysis is theoretically valid, correctly applied, and accurately interpreted.”⁴⁶⁴ There is great evidence that the universe is billions of light-years in radius. The constant of the speed of light is not changing and would disrupt all of physics and life if it did change. If the universe is billions of light-years wide and the speed of light is constant at precisely 299,792,458 meters per second (rounded off to 186,282,397 miles per second; 670,616,629.384 miles per hour) and light from the most distant objects is over twelve billion light-years away so also over twelve billion years old, then the conclusion is that the universe is between 13.7 and 15 billion years old. “The abundant and consistent evidence from astronomy, physics, geology, and paleontology must be taken seriously.”⁴⁶⁵ Most theologians would agree that the Bible and the creation, when correctly understood, must be in accord because both are from God. Some counter-arguments, such as a claim that light has changed its speed or that relativity allows a 6,000-year-old-universe, have been made. But upon examination, none has proven compelling.

(5b) *By Adam’s sin “death spread to all men,” not to all animals.* If there was no animal death before Adam’s sin, all other arguments about an old earth with ancient life are irrelevant. Romans 5:12 states, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Ross makes a four-part claim. First, “The death Adam experienced is carefully qualified in the text

⁴⁶³ Ross, *Time*, 53-72.

⁴⁶⁴ Ross, *Time*, 53-54.

⁴⁶⁵ Ross, *Time*, 54. However, most theologians would not agree with a further overstatement Ross makes. He claims, “The facts of nature may be likened to a sixty-seventh book of the Bible.” This is a theologically problematic statement because there is a fundamental difference between the written communication of the Bible and the objects and forces of the universe. The universe is not a book of the Bible. Both the Bible and the creation reveal truth from and about God, but in very different ways.

as being visited on ‘all men’—not on plants and animals, just on human beings (Romans 5:12, 18–19).”⁴⁶⁶

Second, immediate “death through sin” was spiritual death, which constituted the most fundamental death; physical death came later as the result of spiritual death. “When Adam sinned, he instantly ‘died’ just as God said he would (‘In the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die’—Genesis 2:17, NJKV).”⁴⁶⁷ “For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ” (1 Cor. 15:21–22, NRSV). “All” refers to humans, not all animals (first point), and “made alive” means made alive spiritually (second point), whereas human physical resurrection is still future. Animals are not made alive in Christ, so animals did not die in Adam. “My point is that only human beings, spiritual beings, are ‘made alive in Christ.’”⁴⁶⁸ On the basis of both Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, “no reason is found to deny physical death for nonhuman life previous to Adam’s sin.”

Third, even the argument by young earth creationists that there was only vegetarianism before Adam’s sin would not have prevented animal death caused by large animals such as elephants in the vicinity of smaller animals.⁴⁶⁹ Thus nonhuman life could have lived and died over long ages before Adam sinned.

Fourth, sin did not begin with Adam but with Lucifer, who was present on earth beginning at an unstated time before the Adam’s fall. So even if “soulish” animal death is tied to sin, which Ross seems ambivalent about, animal death need not have begun first with Adam’s sin. Then Ross argues that the “very good” earth was not a “perfect” earth and that animal death is not evil, so animal death could have occurred and been beneficial in the very good earth God made.

(5c) *Creation has been subject to the “bondage of decay” (entropy) since its beginning.* Hugh Ross quotes Romans 8:20–22 in the NIV:

⁴⁶⁶ Ross, *Time*, 61.

⁴⁶⁷ Ross, *Time*, 61.

⁴⁶⁸ Hugh Ross seems to be claiming that in 1 Corinthians 15:21–22 the issue is spiritual death of humans. However “The resurrection of the dead” is a physical resurrection. If the verses are limited to human death, that death was first spiritual death but also included physical death and physical resurrection. So he takes his argument one step further, in my opinion, one step too far and an unnecessary step at that.

⁴⁶⁹ Ross, *Time*, 63.

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

He then explains that some creationists, I presume he means young earth creationists, “assume that the law of entropy, which describes the decreasing order in the universe, did not take effect until Adam and Eve sinned.” He equates “the ‘bondage of decay’—i.e., to the second law of thermodynamics”⁴⁷⁰ or entropy. He then explains Duncan and Hall’s conclusion from this assumption of no increased entropy before the fall: “Based on this assumption, the time between the universe’s creation and Adam and Eve’s fall must be brief.”⁴⁷¹ Ross responds that without entropy, “work (at least in the universe God designed) would be impossible.”⁴⁷² The using up of useful energy in the universe has made work possible (Adam was to “work” in the Garden) but this also meant the universe was already “running down” (increasing in entropy) before Adam’s fall. Moreover, “Romans 8 explicitly indicates only when the bondage to decay will end. It says little about when it first began.”⁴⁷³ “In Genesis 3:16, God says to Eve, ‘I will greatly increase [or multiply] your pains in childbearing.’ He does not say ‘introduce.’”⁴⁷⁴ He explains that “‘increase’ implies that ‘there would have been some pain’ even before the fall.”⁴⁷⁵ Some pain is a necessary warning mechanism, but pain of childbirth would be *increased* after the fall. Thus the metaphor of the creation groaning “in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” is an appropriate description of the pain and animal death that were occurring both before and after Adam’s fall until now. So Ross claims that Adam’s sin did not introduce either pain or animal death, but rather immediate human spiritual death.

The new heavens and new earth described in Revelation 21 will not experience any more death. Young earth creationists claim that because there will be no death in the new creation, there was no death in the first creation before Adam’s fall. But the Bible does not explicitly state that there was no death of animals before Adam’s sin.

⁴⁷⁰ Duncan, *Genesis*, 72.

⁴⁷¹ Ross, *Time*, 65.

⁴⁷² Ross, *Time*, 65.

⁴⁷³ Ross, *Time*, 66.

⁴⁷⁴ Ross, *Time*, 68.

⁴⁷⁵ Ross, *Time*, 68.

This scenario allows an older earth with animal life and death before Adam's sin. However, Hugh Ross did not give a Biblical basis for when animal death did begin, why death began or the "one" who subjected creation to frustration. Who was the "one": Adam, as young earth creationists claim, or Satan and his fall into sin sometime before Adam's fall, as several other theories propose? Ross has left out this key element in his argument, thus rendering it less compelling.

(5d) *An older universe and earth do not entail chance-caused evolution.* Ross clearly does not believe in chance-caused naturalistic macroevolution circumventing God. "Do long creation days and an old earth and universe really make room for naturalistic evolution? The answer is a resounding no." Then he devotes an entire chapter⁴⁷⁶ and later an entire book, coauthored with Fazale Rana, demonstrating his belief that God, not chance, is the source of all life. Ross and Rana then explain *why* humans are here. "From a biblical perspective, why would be the all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving God of the Bible."⁴⁷⁷

Thus, Hugh Ross argues that the apparent older age of the universe and earth is not nullified by problematic arguments claiming no running down of the universe, no animal death, no pain, and no decay before Adam's fall. But at the same time he is declaring very clearly that he is *not* a theistic evolutionist, that animal life and death before Adam was not simply chance evolution.

(6) *The six days' work was on earth's sky, sea, and land, not on the universe.* The key to understanding the creation is the object worked on for the six days and the perspective of the Observer.

(6a) *Genesis 1:2 shifts focus from the universe to the earth.* "As the text transitions from verse 1 to verse 2, the focus shifts from the cosmos to the early earth."⁴⁷⁸ All the rest of Genesis 1 will be about planet earth. Genesis 1:2 begins, "And the earth was *tōhû v^ābōhû*," not "the heavens and earth were *tōhû v^ābōhû*."

(6b) *The reference frame for the six days was the perspective of the stated Observer.* "The reference frame also shifts. Genesis 1:2 says that the Spirit of God hovered above the primordial Earth's surface. This clue means that the subsequent description of early Earth (and the stages of its transformation) comes from the vantage point of an observer just above

⁴⁷⁶ Ross, *Time*, 73-80.

⁴⁷⁷ Hugh Ross and Fazale Rana, *Origins of Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004).

⁴⁷⁸ Ross, *Origins*, 37.

the surface of the waters, looking up at the sky and across the horizon, describing details as they would have appeared from that perspective.”⁴⁷⁹ Ross follows Galileo, “Begin by establishing [not assuming] the point of view.”⁴⁸⁰ “But with the point of view on the surface of the earth, looking up at the atmosphere of the earth, we recognize that God’s miracles are taking place in the atmosphere of the earth, not beyond it in the galaxy and the solar system.”⁴⁸¹

(6c) *Tōhû v^ābōhû meant earth was unfit for life and empty of life.* The only occurrences of the two terms together and the only other occurrences of וְהָיָה בָּרֶחֱבֵי (*bōhû*) are in Jeremiah 4:23 and Isaiah 34:11. Both of these quotes are about a nation after its conquest. The conquered land was made empty of human life and unfit for human life. וְהָיָה בָּרֶחֱבֵי וְהָיָה תֵּלֵי (*tōhû v^ābōhû*) means that planet earth was “empty of life and unfit for life.”⁴⁸² Together in Genesis 1:2 וְהָיָה בָּרֶחֱבֵי וְהָיָה תֵּלֵי (*tōhû v^ābōhû*) indicates a “desolate condition of early Earth.” “In fact scientists refer to this period of Earth’s history (from 4.5 to about 3.9 billion years ago) as the Hadean Era, after Hades (Greek for hell).” This וְהָיָה בָּרֶחֱבֵי וְהָיָה תֵּלֵי (*tōhû v^ābōhû*, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) era continued “beyond the 3.9-billion-year mark, even into the era after Earth had cooled sufficiently for oceans to form.”⁴⁸³ So וְהָיָה בָּרֶחֱבֵי וְהָיָה תֵּלֵי (*tōhû v^ābōhû*, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) applied specifically to planet earth and indicated that our planet was still “empty of life and unfit for life,” which deficiency would be remedied during the six day-ages.

(6d) *Darkness at the location of the Observer was caused by earth’s early opaque atmosphere.* “When the planets were forming, opaque (or nearly opaque) atmospheres shrouded them.”⁴⁸⁴ This corresponds to Genesis 1:2b, “And darkness was over the surface of the deep.”

(6e) *God made earth’s core, mantle, and crust before creating the ocean.* Ross explains, “Psalm 104:5–6 also describes primordial Earth’s surface as covered entirely with water.”

⁴⁷⁹ Ross, *Origins*, 38.

⁴⁸⁰ Ross, *Time*, 149, quoting James Broderick, *Galileo: The Man, His Work, His Misfortunes* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964, 75-77).

⁴⁸¹ Ross, *Time*, 149

⁴⁸² Ross, *Time*, 153.

⁴⁸³ Ross, *Origins*, 38.

⁴⁸⁴ Ross, *Origins*, 39.

He [God] set the earth on its foundation;
 it [foundation] can never be moved.
 You [God] covered it [earth] with the deep as with a garment;
 the waters stood above the mountains.

“This text implies that God established the planet’s core, mantle, and crust before cloaking Earth in oceans.”⁴⁸⁵

(6f) *Early earth was ocean covered, just as Genesis 1:2 states.* “An observer would also note that Earth’s entire surface was submerged below oceans. The biblical text implies that initially no permanent land-masses were present.”⁴⁸⁶ The Biblical texts describing the founding of earth before the world-covering ocean are Genesis 1:2, Psalm 104:5–6, and Job 38:4–11.

(6g) *God may have made early primitive sea life before the six day-eras.* “Scientific evidence for ocean life predating land life poses no threat either. The Spirit of God ‘brooded’ over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2), possibly creating life in the oceans before the events of the six creation days begin.”⁴⁸⁷

(7) *The events of the six days from the Bible and science agree.*

(7a) *In day-era one light broke through to earth’s surface.* “Light was not created on the first creation day. On that day the light already created ‘in the beginning’ suddenly broke through to the earth’s surface. This breakthrough required the transformation of the atmosphere (plus the interplanetary medium) from opaque to translucent.”⁴⁸⁸ “During creation day one, light visibly broke through to earth’s surface for the first time.” “Job 38:8–9 affirms that Earth’s primordial waters were enshrouded by an opaque cloud cover.”⁴⁸⁹

Who shut up the sea behind doors [birth motif]
 when it burst forth from the womb,
 when I made the clouds its garment
 and wrapped it in thick darkness?

So day one began by light breaking through the cloud for the first time to the Observer.

⁴⁸⁵ Ross, *Origins*, 39-40.

⁴⁸⁶ Ross, *Origins*, 39.

⁴⁸⁷ Ross, *Time*, 153.

⁴⁸⁸ Ross, *Time*, 149.

⁴⁸⁹ Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004), 232.

(7b) *In the second day-era water vapor rose from the sea surface.* “Formation of water vapor in the troposphere under conditions that establish a stable water cycle” occurred in the second day-era.⁴⁹⁰

(7c) *In the third day-era God formed continents and land plants.* “Formation of continental land masses together with ocean basins” and the “production of plants on the continental land masses” occurred in the third day-era.⁴⁹¹

(7d) *The sun, moon, and stars were created “In the beginning” then became distinguishable in the fourth day-era.* “The heavens and earth (*shamayim erets*) of verse 1 includes the entire physical universe of galaxies, stars, planets, etc.” But “earth’s primordial atmosphere” was still only translucent, not transparent, until the fourth day. God made the sun, moon, and stars “distinguishable on that [fourth] day.”⁴⁹² In this day-era occurred the “transformation of the atmosphere from a translucent condition to one that is at least occasionally transparent.”⁴⁹³

(7e) *In the fifth day-era God created sea mammals and birds.* In the fifth day-era was “creation by God’s fiat miracles of sea mammals and birds.”⁴⁹⁴

(7f) *In the sixth day-era God made three classes of modern land mammals.* All three classes were *nephesh*, “soulful creatures that can relate to humans; creatures with qualities of mind, will, and emotion.”⁴⁹⁵ God made *remes*, which were not creeping insects because insects are not *nephesh* or soulful animals, but were modern “short legged land mammals such as rodents and hares.” Also, God made the modern “long-legged quadruped usually described as wild” and the modern “long-legged quadruped that is easy to tame.” “The fossil record confirms that such land mammals do not show up until after the initial appearance of birds and sea mammals.”⁴⁹⁶ So Scripture and science agree. These modern land mammals were made to be “capable of interacting with the future human race.”⁴⁹⁷

(7g) *Also in the sixth day-era God created humans uniquely with spirit.* Finally, the sixth day-era culminated in the “creation by God’s fiat miracle of the human species.” “The

⁴⁹⁰ Ross, *Time*, 153.

⁴⁹¹ Ross, *Time*, 153.

⁴⁹² Ross, *Time*, 150-151.

⁴⁹³ Ross, *Time*, 153.

⁴⁹⁴ Ross, *Time*, 153.

⁴⁹⁵ Ross, *Time*, 152.

⁴⁹⁶ Ross, *Time*, 152.

⁴⁹⁷ Ross, *Time*, 153.

Bible clearly denies that any of these [human] species descended from lower forms of life. Humans being are distinct from all other animal, including the bipedal primates that preceded them, in that humans alone possess body, soul, and spirit.”⁴⁹⁸

(7h) *The seventh day-era of God’s rest did not end in one day.* “Information about the seventh day is given in Psalm 95 and Hebrews 4. In these passages we learn that God’s day of rest continues.” “We gather that the seventh day of Genesis 1 and 2 represents a minimum of several thousand years and a maximum that is open ended (but finite). It seems reasonable to conclude then given the parallelism of the Genesis creation account, that the first six days may also have been long time periods. Supporting evidence for the seventh day as an ongoing period of rest from creating comes from John 5:16–18. Here, Jesus defended His healing on the Sabbath by saying that God, His Father, ‘is always at his work to his very day, and I, too, am working.’”⁴⁹⁹

(7i) *God ceased creating new life kinds during this present seventh day.* Hugh Ross explains that God introduced the various life kinds during the six creative day-ages but that God ceased work on the seventh day. Since there was no end declared to the seventh day, we are in that time of cessation of creation of life kinds. “After the sixth creation day, God ceased to introduce new life forms on the earth.” Ross continues, “On this point, most interpreters agree. However, the young-earth creationists’ understanding of the Fall and the Flood requires that a huge number of new species of animal life appear on the earth in just a few hundreds to thousands of years.”⁵⁰⁰ According to young earth creationists, from their estimate of 3,000 to 8,000 species⁵⁰¹ carried on the ark, there have evolved in just a few hundred to a few thousand years the “four million or more land dwelling species”⁵⁰² now on earth. Ross reprimands these creationists for espousing in the seventh day of God’s rest this hyperevolution far beyond what that “the most optimistic Darwinist has ever dared to suggest. They [young earth creationists] do so despite overwhelming physical evidence that

⁴⁹⁸ Ross, *Time*, 154.

⁴⁹⁹ Ross, *Time*, 49.

⁵⁰⁰ Ross, “Day-Age,” *Genesis*, 127.

⁵⁰¹ <http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/feedback/2006/0908.asp>

⁵⁰² Ross includes insects but many 6,000-year-old-universe advocates would not. They would include only birds (10,000 species today), bats (1,100 species), mammals (5,500 species today), and land reptiles (about 8,000 species today) for a total of about 25,000 species today from perhaps 3,000-8,000 species of birds, reptiles, and mammals on the ark. These numbers suggest speciation of about 5 species for every kind of animal on the ark in about 5,000 years, more feasible than the extreme numbers Ross suggests. Still, we do not see that speed of speciation today.

denies the possibility of such rapid change. If naturalistic evolutionary processes actually did proceed with such speed, they would, of course, be observable in real time in our time.”⁵⁰³

(8) *The Bible, when accurately interpreted, and true science, when accurately describing the same creation events, agree—giving evidence that the God of the Bible is the Creator.* “Obviously, no author writing more than 3,400 years ago, as Moses did, could have so accurately described and sequenced these events, plus the initial condition, without divine assistance. And if God could guide the words of Moses to scientific and historical precision in this most complex report of divine activity, we have reason to believe we can trust Him to communicate with perfection through all the other Bible writers as well.”⁵⁰⁴ Ross proposes that “we have potent evidence for a personal Creator, specifically for the God of the Bible.”⁵⁰⁵ He concludes, “The evidence for a universe designed, initiated, shaped, and sustained exactly as the Bible describes, by God, continues to mount.”⁵⁰⁶

PROBLEMATIC CLAIMS OF PROGRESSIVE CREATIONISM

(2) *Each yôm referred to an era of millions or billions of years.* Hugh Ross argues for this idea by a series of claims.

(2a) *Yôm referred to God’s days.* Hugh Ross refers to “the length of God’s days,” quoting Psalm 90:4: “For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch [four hours] in the night.”⁵⁰⁷ So he transfers this statement explaining that God is not time-bound as we are (“Before . . . [the creation], from everlasting to everlasting you are God” [Psalm 90:2c, NIV]) to his claim that the Genesis 1 days lasted millions or billions of years eras.

However, the psalmist employs a “like” comparison to explain what is difficult for us to understand, that God is not time-bound. The context of Psalm 90:4 is God’s eternity *before* the creation, not thousand-year earth days during the creation time. Psalm 90 also mentions men at the writer’s time *after* creation. The verse is not even about the six days *during* the creation time. Also, the six days in Genesis 1 were identified by evening and morning markers indicating earth days, not God’s eternity. Moreover, the items completed

⁵⁰³ Ross, “Day-Age,” *Genesis*, 127.

⁵⁰⁴ Ross, *Time*, 154.

⁵⁰⁵ Ross, *Fingerprint*, 4.

⁵⁰⁶ Ross, *Fingerprint*, 185.

⁵⁰⁷ High Ross, *Creation and Time* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), 45.

during the six days began with light to rotating earth, forming daytime and nighttime, which could not be more explicitly an earth day. If Ross were to argue from the quote of Psalm 90:4 in 2 Peter 3:8, Peter is speaking of God's patience in judgment, not the six days of Genesis 1. Claiming "God days" is a problematic beginning for his claim that *yôm* in Genesis 1 meant day-ages of millions or billions of years of geological era.

(2b) *Yôm has a semantic range including an era, allowing day-ages.* Ross gives many examples of the semantic range of יוֹם (yôm, "day") used for longer time periods.⁵⁰⁸

We have no contention against the semantic range of יוֹם (yôm, "day") including times longer than a day. This actually seems to be his biggest argument. Hugh Ross does not seem to realize that the semantic range of יוֹם (yôm, "day") is minimally relevant, because it is not the extent of the semantic range but the use of the word in the particular sentence that limits the semantic range to a particular meaning. This is an example of illegitimate totality transfer of the full range of meanings into a particular sentence. In the sentence, "Yankee baseball player Babe Ruth sometimes broke his bat when he tried to hit a home run," or "Fiery South African cricket player Hansie Cronje used his cricket bat with ability as he captained the team," the word "bat" cannot mean the small nocturnal flying mammal just because that mammal is in the semantic range of the word "bat." In fact, even the two kinds of bats, baseball or cricket, cannot be interchanged. The meaning of "bat" is determined by the sentence. Ross's main argument for the meaning of יוֹם (yôm, "day") should be by the syntax and semantics of the sentence in question, with the broad semantic range of יוֹם (yôm, "day") providing the possible alternatives. Later we will argue for the use of יוֹם (yôm, "day") in the chronological sentences ending each of the six days.

(2c) *Ereb and Boqer May possibly be metaphorical.* Hugh Ross claims that "evening" may have had "possible metaphoric usage."⁵⁰⁹ The argument would be that if "evening" were sometime used metaphorically, then "evening" in Genesis 1 would not necessarily have indicated the evening of a daylight-evening-nighttime-morning cycle day. Ross does not give exegetical support for this claim.

⁵⁰⁸ Ross, *Time*, 46-47.

⁵⁰⁹ Ross, *Time*, 46.

I checked the twenty-five occurrences of עֶרֶב (erev, “evening”) used as “evening” in the Hebrew Bible, and none has solely a metaphorical use. The metaphorical use of “evening,” as “in the evening of one’s life,” is an English practice, not a Hebrew usage. All twenty-five occurrences of “evening” in the Hebrew text indicated a daylight-evening-nighttime-morning cycle day. Nineteen occurrences of עֶרֶב (erev, “evening”) and בֹּקֶר (bōqer, “morning”) together are about the normal evening and morning of a regular daylight-evening-nighttime-morning cycle day. This evidence weighs heavily against Ross’s claim of day-eras. In Genesis 1, the “evening” on day one, which had daytime and nighttime (1:5), was followed by morning. How can a day be more specifically a normal day than to have daylight, evening, nighttime, and morning? Day one set the meaning for the successive days.

(2d) *Yôm with an ordinal number may refer to a time period longer than twenty-four hours.* Ross explains, “Young-earth creationists have argued for twenty-four-hour days on the basis that *yôm* when attached to an ordinal (second, third, fourth, etc.) always refers to a twenty-four hour period.” Ross responds that “it is true only for passages describing days of human activity rather than days of divine activity.” Hosea 6:2 prophesies that ‘after two days he [God] will revive us [Israel]; on the third day he will restore us.’” He continues, “For centuries Bible commentators have noted that the ‘days’ in this passage (where the ordinal is used) refer to a year, years, a thousand years, or maybe more.”⁵¹⁰

Ross should have said “*some* commentators” suggest that these eschatological days may be longer, hardly proof of his point that creation days in a non-eschatological narrative text such as Genesis 1 were long. In contrast to those commentators, Leon Wood comments, “The reference to ‘two days’ and ‘the third day’ means only that the restoration mentioned in v. 1 will come surely and quickly.”⁵¹¹ Hubbard sees the reference to a short affliction from which God graciously brings relatively quick recovery.⁵¹² Moreover, day one in Genesis 1 is cardinal. Also, all six occurrences of יוֹם אֶחָד (yôm ehād, “day one”) in non-prophetic literature are certainly of a day-night cycle day. Even the four in prophetic passages are likely the same. And day one sets the time scale for the subsequent six days.

⁵¹⁰ Ross, *Time*, 47.

⁵¹¹ Leon Wood, “Hosea” in Frank Gaebelin, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 193.

⁵¹² David Allan Hubbard, *Hosea*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 125.

(2e) *The syntax of the yôm sentences is unusual.* Hugh Ross claims that “And was evening and was morning day X” “is clearly a departure from simple and ordinary expression.”

However, all that he can suggest from this argument is that “it does suggest that ‘day’ here is to be taken in some unusual manner.”⁵¹³ Syntax should be Ross’s major argument, but his sole argument from syntax has no force. That the syntax may be unusual says nothing about the day length.

(2g) *The events of the sixth yôm were too long to have occurred in twelve hours.* God created Adam. Then God gave instructions to Adam. Next Adam named the kinds of animals but could not find any suitable helper for himself. Then Adam slept, during which time God made Eve. And finally Adam spoke in what may have been their marriage ceremony. All these events would fit a longer period of time better than a twelve-hour daylight day.

These events do not *prove* that the days were billions of years, a *very* full sixth day indeed, but not provably a day-age era. Also, although I am not affirming their idea, Payne and Hayward have suggested that time lapsed between the days. That alternative would solve the problem and leave the sixth day a normal day-night cycle day.

(2h) *The seventh yôm had no stated ending.* Ross says, “This distinct change in form for the seventh day strongly suggests that this day has (or had) not yet ended. Ross claims that if the seventh day were longer, so must have been the previous days.

However, Ross’s seventh day argument ignores the fact that the previous six days did have a day-night cycle with evening and morning time markers, but the seventh day did not.

(2i) *Yôm in Genesis 2:4b was longer than twenty-four hours.* Genesis 2:4b speaks of “in the day the Lord made the heavens and the earth.” So if this “day” refers to either a the beginning in Genesis 1:1 as a time period, all six creation days, or both; “day” in Genesis 2:4 was “a period longer than twenty four hours.”⁵¹⁴ Therefore “day” has a semantic range greater than just a twenty-four-hour day.

However, the Hebrew is not even יוֹם (yôm, “day”); it is יוֹם יוֹם יוֹם, (*b^eyôm*, “when,” “in the day”) in this context meaning “when” (although in other contexts it can mean “in the day”) and is so translated in the NIV. Moreover, Genesis 2:4b begins a new narrative,

⁵¹³ Ross, *Time*, 48.

⁵¹⁴ Ross, *Time*, 52.

the narrative of Adam. All Adam is saying is “When [יָמֵי בְרֵאשִׁית, *b^eyôm*] Yahweh Elohim made the land and sky, no shrub of the field had yet appeared . . .” The sentence is not even about days.

Hugh Ross claims that the days were long eras of millions or billions of years. However, all his arguments for this claim are problematic at best. Most are based on the semantic range of יָמֵי (*yôm*, “day”). However, syntax and context are the real determining factors of meaning.

He also claims that the universe and earth are old, and his arguments for that claim seem much stronger. He seems to assume that the two claims are inextricably linked (and he mixes his arguments for the two claims together), but they are not.

PARTIALLY *SUBSTANTIATED* CLAIMS OF PROGRESSIVE CREATIONISM

(00) *Biblical and true scientific evidence, both correctly interpreted, will agree.*

Hugh Ross may tend to overrate science, and I disagree with his interpretation of *yôm*, but with the addition of the ultimate authority of Scripture, the above principle is basically right.

(0) *The Bible with the aid of science tells us accurately what God did; science tells us how He did it.*

Hugh Ross is largely right that the Bible teaches that we may learn certain things about God from the creation as well as learning from Scripture. However, in my opinion, Dr. Hugh Ross makes a mistake treating the Scriptures and the creation the same, as if both are already in data form simply needing interpreting.

I agree that both special and natural revelation are from God. Psalm 19:1–4 and particularly Romans 1:20 clearly teach that the creation reveals some of God’s attributes, but these attributes are the more general attributes. “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20). But there is some difference between the two sources of revelation. Scripture is verbal revelation giving detailed verbal information, revealing to us specific recorded acts God did in history and specific theological claims. The creation is material giving detailed material information, which can give only those more general theological insights—“his eternal power and divine

nature.” The two have some important overlap but are apples and oranges (both overlapping as fruit but not fully the same things). Scripture and the creation both tell truth about God, both are important, and both contain testable evidence for Christianity; but it is an oversimplification to see the two as identical sources of data, both needing interpreting.

Hugh Ross believes much that is right, but he needs to be more careful to let the Bible speak in its own language in its own time by its own authorship. Hugh Ross seems to be basically on the right track, other than on *yôm* being a geological day-age era.

(1) Two main claims of the big bang theory correspond to Bible claims—beginning and expansion.

The Bible certainly teaches that time and the universe had a beginning. The Bible also teaches that God spread out of the universe. These two facts, along with the precisely right conditions of the universe for humans, do point toward a transcendent personal Beginner. This claim, however, is only “partially supported” because it would be historicism to go beyond the claim that “beginning” and “expansion” are Biblical and claim that the big bang is Biblical.

(2f) Sequential chronological Bible statements are intentionally verifiable, but the six days are not unless they are day-ages (or with time between the days).

We can agree that the “Chronologies in the Bible . . . record sequences that are significant and that the reader can discern.” “The supernatural accuracy of such chronologies not only proves their inspiration, but also gives assurance for today and hope for tomorrow.”⁵¹⁵

For the creation days, long periods during which increasingly complex life-forms were created are verifiable and useful for validating the supernatural accuracy of the writer’s statements. But if all creation were completed in six 24-hour days, the most sophisticated measuring techniques . . . would be totally incapable of discerning the sequence of events. Thus, a major use of the chronology would be thwarted.

This argument is equally supportive of either long day-ages or time between the day-night-cycle days. But it does not constitute proof for either.

⁵¹⁵ Ross, “Day-Age View,” 149.

(3) *The six days were sequential.* Ross and Archer claim that the days “are sequential; that is, that the six epochs revealed in Genesis 1 occurred in the order revealed.”⁵¹⁶ They make this claim on the basis that “nowhere else in the Bible do we find such a density of chronological terms.”⁵¹⁷

They are right claiming that such density of chronological terms can only indicate consecutive narrative, as opposed to the nonchronological days claim of the framework theory. Also, the six days of work preceded rest (Exo. 20:8–11), indicating that the series was sequential.⁵¹⁸ I agree that the density of chronological terms days weighs heavily for chronologically sequential days rather than nonchronological days, but I do not need to agree on long days.

(4d) *The creation period was referred to as the “generations of the heavens and the earth.”* Genesis is divided by *tôlê dôt* or statements: “These are the generations of.”⁵¹⁹ Genesis 2:4a says, “These *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth,” referring back to the actual creation in Genesis 1:1 as well as six days.

Ross is right that the whole creation era of the beginning and the six days together should be seen as “generations” in length. This fits the generational aspect of the genre. No doubt, Payne would suggest time between the six days as a better solution than day-ages.

(5a) *God does not deceive in either the Bible or in the creation.*

Ross says, “Whatever objects of His creation we subject to scientific analysis will reveal their true age—provided the analysis is theoretically valid, correctly applied, and accurately interpreted.”⁵²⁰ He concludes that the universe is between 13.7 and 15 billion years old. “The abundant and consistent evidence from astronomy, physics, geology, and paleontology must be taken seriously.”⁵²¹

⁵¹⁶ Ross, “Day-Age View,” 153.

⁵¹⁷ Ross, “Day-Age View,” 154.

⁵¹⁸ Ross, “Day-Age View,” 154.

⁵¹⁹ Ross, *Time*, 52.

⁵²⁰ Ross, *Time*, 53-54.

⁵²¹ Ross, *Time*, 54. However, most theologians would not agree with a further overstatement Ross makes. He claims, “The facts of nature may be likened to a sixty-seventh book of the Bible.” This is a theologically problematic statement because there is a fundamental difference between the written communication of the Bible and the objects and forces of the universe. The universe is not a book of the Bible. Both the Bible and the creation reveal truth from and about God, but in very different ways.

I agree completely that God does not deceive, but I am not willing to take an old earth creation position based on the Bible, when I believe the Bible does not tell us the age of the earth and universe.

Most theologians would agree that the Bible and the creation, when correctly understood, must be in accord because both are from God. Some young earth creationists have questioned if we correctly understand the constant of the speed of light, but no one has given a counter argument that is compelling enough to be widely accepted even among creationists. Even the Answers in Genesis book *The Answers Book* asks, “Does distant starlight prove an older universe?” The book answers, “There is currently no wholly satisfactory solution that is accepted by the majority of creation scientists.”⁵²² If the speed of light is a real constant (and current measurements always give the same speed, and older measurements before modern accurate instruments gave measurements both slower and faster within the limits of their instrument accuracy) and the universe does apparently extend over twelve billion light years from us, so light from those most distant objects are apparently over twelve billion years old, how shall Christians respond?

(5b) *By Adam’s sin “death spread to all men,” not to all animals.* If there was no animal death before Adam’s sin, all other arguments about an old earth with ancient life are irrelevant. Romans 5:12 states, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

I may not totally disagree with Ross’s four-part claim: First, “The death Adam experienced is carefully qualified in the text as being visited on ‘all men’—not on plants and animals, just on human beings (Romans 5:12, 18–19).”⁵²³

Second, immediate “death through sin” was spiritual death which constituted the most fundamental death; physical death came later as the result of spiritual death. “I must say that Ross, in his enthusiasm for the fact that spiritual death is the fundamental and first aspect of death from sin, seems at times to say it is the only aspect of death resulting from sin.”⁵²⁴ He should be more careful with theology. Human physical death, too, is a result of sin.

⁵²² Ken Ham, Andrew Snelling, Carl Wieland, *The Answers Book* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1993), 185.

⁵²³ Ross, *Time*, 61.

⁵²⁴ Ross, “Day-Age View,” 151.

Third, even the argument by young earth creationists that there was only vegetarianism before Adam's sin would not have prevented animal death. Concerning the claim by young earth creationists of pre-fall universal herbivorism, Ross should at least address Genesis 1:29–30, which says that only seed plants were given to man for food, but, in contrast, all plants were given to animals for food. On the basis of this text, young earth creationists incorrectly claim that *only* plants were given to animals for food before Adam's fall and that carnivorism did not exist prior to Adam's fall, so no animal death occurred. Ross does not address this text sufficiently.⁵²⁵

Fourth, sin did not begin with Adam but with Lucifer, who was present on earth beginning at an unstated time before the Adam's fall. Then Ross argues that the "very good" earth was not a "perfect" earth and that animal death is not evil, so animal death could have occurred and been beneficial in the very good earth God made.

Even if Ross is basically correct, which I am not claiming, I find his approach to this last point about not "perfect" to be problematic. I think he approaches the issue the wrong way.

(5c) Creation has been subject to the "bondage of decay" (entropy) since its beginning.

Hugh Ross may be at least partly right in his claim. He quotes Romans 8:20–22 in the NIV:

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

He then explains that some creationists, I presume he means young earth creationists, "assume that the law of entropy, which describes the decreasing order in the universe, did not take effect until Adam and Eve sinned."⁵²⁶ Ross responds that without entropy, "work (at least in the universe God designed) would be impossible."⁵²⁷

⁵²⁵ Or if he has, I have not found it. He would do us a great service if he put a verse index at the end of his otherwise very helpful books.

⁵²⁶ Duncan, *Genesis*, 72.

⁵²⁷ Ross, *Time*, 65.

I can agree that entropy occurred before the fall.

(5d) *An older universe and earth do not entail chance-caused evolution.*

Ross clearly does not believe in chance-caused naturalistic macroevolution circumventing God.

I agree with his case against naturalistic macroevolution but not his claim for long days. “

(6g) *God may have made early primitive sea life before the six day-eras.* “Scientific evidence for ocean life predating land life poses no threat either.”⁵²⁸

That may be, but he is arguing from science. The Bible is silent on this. The Spirit “brooding” does not fit the creation of life syntax acts in the six days.

(7) *The events of the six days from the Bible and science agree.*

We may partially agree on Ross’s view of what happened in the days, but not on the length of the days as “day-eras.”

(7a) *In day-era one light broke through to earth’s surface.*

We agree that “Light was not created on the first creation day. On that day the light already created ‘in the beginning’ suddenly broke through to the earth’s surface. This breakthrough required the transformation of the atmosphere (plus the interplanetary medium) from opaque to translucent.”⁵²⁹ “During creation day one, light visibly broke through to earth’s surface for the first time.” “Job 38:8–9 affirms that Earth’s primordial waters were enshrouded by an opaque cloud cover.”⁵³⁰ So day one began by light breaking through the cloud for the first time to the Observer.

(7b) *In the second day-era water vapor rose from the sea surface.*

“Formation of water vapor in the troposphere under conditions that establish a stable water cycle” occurred in the second day-era.⁵³¹

(7c) *In the third day-era God formed continents and land plants.*

“Formation of continental land masses together with ocean basins” and the “production of plants on the continental land masses” occurred in the third day-era.⁵³²

⁵²⁸ Ross, *Time*, 153.

⁵²⁹ Ross, *Time*, 149.

⁵³⁰ Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004), 232.

⁵³¹ Ross, *Time*, 153.

⁵³² Ross, *Time*, 153.

(7d) *The sun, moon, and stars were created “In the beginning” then became distinguishable in the fourth day-era.*

Hugh Ross’s view of the fourth day is argued cogently. “The heavens and earth (*shamayim erets*) of verse 1 includes the entire physical universe of galaxies, stars, planets, etc.” But “earth’s primordial atmosphere” was still only translucent, not transparent, until the fourth day. God made the sun, moon, and stars “distinguishable on that [fourth] day.”⁵³³ In this day-era occurred the “transformation of the atmosphere from a translucent condition to one that is at least occasionally transparent.”⁵³⁴

I basically agree. But the words “distinguishable” and “visible” which Ross also uses, do not correspond well with any word in Genesis 1:14–19. Ross has already established the concept of the Observer. A better statement is that given a divine Observer as the Narrator of the Genesis 1 text, God caused the luminaries to “be” in earth’s sky from the perspective of the Observer. Ross’s basic idea seems defensible but his terminology does not correspond well with the Hebrew text. Such a deficiency is somewhat understandable from a scientist rather than a Hebrew scholar.

(7e) *In the fifth day-era God created sea mammals and birds.*

In the fifth day-era was “creation by God’s fiat miracles of sea mammals and birds.”⁵³⁵

(7f) *In the sixth day-era God made three classes of modern land mammals.*

All three classes were *nephesh*, “soulful creatures that can relate to humans; creatures with qualities of mind, will, and emotion.”⁵³⁶ God made *remes*, which were not creeping insects because insects are not *nephesh* or soulful animals, but were modern “short legged land mammals such as rodents and hares.” Also, God made the modern “long-legged quadruped usually described as wild” and the modern “long-legged quadruped that is easy to tame.” “The fossil record confirms that such land mammals do not show up until after the initial appearance of birds and sea mammals.”⁵³⁷

He may be right on this.

(7g) *Also in the sixth day-era God created humans uniquely with spirit.*

⁵³³ Ross, *Time*, 150-151.

⁵³⁴ Ross, *Time*, 153.

⁵³⁵ Ross, *Time*, 153.

⁵³⁶ Ross, *Time*, 152.

⁵³⁷ Ross, *Time*, 152.

Finally, the sixth day-era culminated in the “creation by God’s fiat miracle of the human species.” “The Bible clearly denies that any of these [human] species descended from lower forms of life. Humans being are distinct from all other animal, including the bipedal primates that preceded them, in that humans alone possess body, soul, and spirit.”⁵³⁸

He argues this well.

(7h) *The seventh day-era of God’s rest did not end in one day.*

“Information about the seventh day is given in Psalm 95 and Hebrews 4. In these passages we learn that God’s day of rest continues.” “We gather that the seventh day of Genesis 1 and 2 represents a minimum of several thousand years and a maximum that is open ended (but finite. Supporting evidence for the seventh day as an ongoing period of rest from creating comes from John 5:16–18. Here, Jesus defended His healing on the Sabbath by saying that God, His Father, ‘is always at his work to his very day, and I, too, am working.’”⁵³⁹

However, these texts do not explicitly state that the seventh day continues, so the claim is not that clear cut. And even if it were, the seventh day was not given a time marker end, but the six previous days were. So the argument does not really prove Ross’s claim that if the seventh day were longer, then so were the six previous days. I agree that the seventh day was a day of rest, but I am not sure that it is an era.

(7i) *God ceased creating new life kinds during this present seventh day-era.*

Hugh Ross explains that God introduced the various life kinds during the six creative day-ages but that God ceased work on the seventh day. Ross reprimands young earth creationists for espousing in the seventh day of God’s rest this hyperevolution far beyond what that “the most optimistic Darwinist has ever dared to suggest.”⁵⁴⁰

He has a good point.

(8) *The Bible, when accurately interpreted, and true science, when accurately describing the same creation events, agree—giving evidence that the God of the Bible is the Creator.* Ross proposes that “we have potent evidence for a personal Creator, specifically for

⁵³⁸ Ross, *Time*, 154.

⁵³⁹ Ross, *Time*, 49.

⁵⁴⁰ Ross, “Day-Age,” Genesis, 127.

the God of the Bible.”⁵⁴¹ He concludes, “The evidence for a universe designed, initiated, shaped, and sustained exactly as the Bible describes, by God, continues to mount.”⁵⁴²

LARGELY *SUBSTANTIATED* CLAIMS OF PROGRESSIVE CREATIONISM⁵⁴³

(6) *The six days’ work was on earth’s sky, sea, and land, not on the universe.*

Ross is right that the key to understanding the creation is the perspective of the Observer. I would add that the Observer apparently is the Narrator.

(6a) *Genesis 1:2 shifts focus from the universe to the earth.*

Hugh Ross has a key insight. “As the text transitions from verse 1 to verse 2, the focus shifts from the cosmos to the early earth.”⁵⁴⁴ All the rest of Genesis 1 will be about planet earth. Genesis 1:2 begins, “And the earth was *tōhû v^ābōhû*,” not “the heavens and earth were *tōhû v^ābōhû*.”

(6b) *The reference frame for the six days was the perspective of the stated Observer.*

Ross is correct on this point. “The reference frame also shifts. Genesis 1:2 says that the Spirit of God hovered above the primordial Earth’s surface. This clue means that the subsequent description of early Earth (and the stages of its transformation) comes from the vantage point of an observer just above the surface of the waters, looking up at the sky and across the horizon, describing details as they would have appeared from that perspective.”⁵⁴⁵ “Looking up at the atmosphere of the earth, we recognize that God’s miracles are taking place in the atmosphere of the earth, not beyond it in the galaxy and the solar system.”⁵⁴⁶

Ross has added a very important insight.

(6c) *Tōhû v^ābōhû meant earth was unfit for life and empty of life.*

Ross correctly understands the meaning of *תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ* (*tōhû v^ābōhû*), which are applied specifically to planet earth and indicated that our planet was still “empty of life and unfit for life,” which deficiency would be remedied during the six day-ages.

(6d) *Darkness at the location of the Observer was caused by earth’s early opaque atmosphere.*

⁵⁴¹ Ross, *Fingerprint*, 4.

⁵⁴² Ross, *Fingerprint*, 185.

⁵⁴³ I am not saying that I agree with everything the author says on these claims, but that on the whole these claims seem supported by Scripture.

⁵⁴⁴ Ross, *Origins*, 37.

⁵⁴⁵ Ross, *Origins*, 38.

⁵⁴⁶ Ross, *Time*, 149

“When the planets were forming, opaque (or nearly opaque) atmospheres shrouded them.”⁵⁴⁷ This corresponds to Genesis 1:2b, “And darkness was over the surface of the deep.”

(6e) *God made earth’s core, mantle, and crust before the ocean.*

Ross explains, “Psalm 104:5–6 also describes primordial Earth’s surface as covered entirely with water.” “This text implies that God established the planet’s core, mantle, and crust before cloaking Earth in oceans.”⁵⁴⁸

(6f) *Early earth was ocean covered, just as Genesis 1:2 states.*

“An observer would also note that Earth’s entire surface was submerged below oceans. The biblical text implies that initially no permanent land-masses were present.”⁵⁴⁹

(5d) *An older universe and earth do not entail chance-caused evolution.*

Neither Ross nor I believe in chance-caused naturalistic macroevolution circumventing God. “Do long creation days and an old earth and universe really make room for naturalistic evolution? The answer is a resounding no.”

(6) *The six days’ work was on earth’s sky, sea, and land, not on the universe.*

Ross is right that the key to understanding the creation is the perspective of the Observer.

(6a) *Genesis 1:2 shifts focus from the universe to the earth.*

“As the text transitions from verse 1 to verse 2, the focus shifts from the cosmos to the early earth.”⁵⁵⁰ All the rest of Genesis 1 will be about planet earth.

This understanding is key to correct interpretation of Genesis 1.

(6b) *The reference frame for the six days was the perspective of the stated Observer.*

We agree that “the reference frame also shifts. Genesis 1:2 says that the Spirit of God hovered above the primordial Earth’s surface.”

(6c) *Tōhû v^abōhû meant earth was unfit for life and empty of life.* The only occurrences of the two terms together and the only other occurrences of *bōhû* are in Jeremiah 4:23 and Isaiah 34:11. Both of these quotes are about a nation after its conquest. The conquered land was made unfit for human life and empty of human life. My caveat is that

⁵⁴⁷ Ross, *Origins*, 39.

⁵⁴⁸ Ross, *Origins*, 39-40.

⁵⁴⁹ Ross, *Origins*, 39.

⁵⁵⁰ Ross, *Origins*, 37.

Ross equates *tōhû v^abōhû* with the Hadean. That is a semantic anachronism. Otherwise, Ross is generally right about the meaning of *tōhû v^abōhû*.

(6d) *Darkness at the location of the Observer was caused by earth's early opaque atmosphere.* “When the planets were forming, opaque (or nearly opaque) atmospheres shrouded them.”⁵⁵¹ This would appear to correspond to Genesis 1:2b, “And darkness was over the surface of the deep.”

(6e) *God made earth's core, mantle, and crust before creating the ocean.*

Ross explains, “Psalm 104:5–6 also describes primordial Earth's surface as covered entirely with water.” This would seem to be accurate.

(6f) *Early earth was ocean covered, just as Genesis 1:2 states.* “An observer would also note that Earth's entire surface was submerged below oceans. The biblical text implies that initially no permanent land-masses were present.”⁵⁵²

There is a great deal to recommend in Ross's work. I think his position would be very strong if he took the “time between the six days” approach instead of the long day-age approach. That I may find Hugh Ross's claim about *yôm* syntactically and linguistically problematic and several of his arguments incomplete does not lessen my appreciation of him as a great fellow Christian who is making wonderful contributions to creation science and apologetics.

SUMMARY OF THE DAY-AGE OR PROGRESSIVE CREATION THEORY

The Bible, with the aid of science, tells us accurately what God did; science tells us how He did it. The Bible and science agree on the two main claims of the big bang theory: beginning and expansion. The big bang's beginning indicated a transcendent personal Beginner. The precisely right conditions of the resulting universe, earth, and life indicate the Creator revealed in the Bible.

Each $\square \square \square \square$ (*yôm*, “day”) referred to an era of millions or billions of years because *yôm* has a semantic range including an era, allowing long day-ages. There is vast evidence

⁵⁵¹ Ross, *Origins*, 39.

⁵⁵² Ross, *Origins*, 39.

that the universe and earth are old, and since God does not deceive in either the Bible or in the creation, the days must have been eras. Moreover, the Bible says that the earth is ancient.

Earth was declared $\text{יָבֵשׁ וְרֵקָה} \text{ (}t\bar{o}h\hat{u} \text{ } v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\hat{u}\text{)}$, or unfit for life and empty of life. From His reference frame just above the waters, the Holy Spirit had a perspective to report the six days' work on earth's (not the universe's) sky, sea, and land as God made them fit for life and filled them with life. On day-era one, sunlight broke through to earth's surface. On the second day-era, water vapor rose from the sea surface, beginning the hydrological cycle. In the third day-era, God formed continents and land plants. In the fourth day-era, God caused the sun, moon, and stars that had been created "in the beginning" to be in the sky to divide day and night and carry out their other time-marking functions. In the fifth day-era, God progressively created sea mammals and birds. In the sixth day-era God progressively made three classes of modern land mammals. These day-eras may have overlapped. Also in the sixth day-era God created Adam, who named the animals, and then God made Eve, both humans uniquely with spirit/image from God.

The events of the sixth day could not have fitted reasonably into one day, again demonstrating that the days were day-eras. Necessarily, animal death occurred before Adam sinned, which began human death, but not animal death. God ceased creating new life kinds during this present seventh day. So the Bible, when accurately interpreted, and true science, when accurately describing the same creation events, agree. This agreement gives evidence that the God of the Bible is the Creator.

7. LITERARY FRAMEWORK THEORY

Meredith Kline is an ordained minister of the conservative Orthodox Presbyterian Church, professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, and author or contributor to numerous books and articles on the Old Testament. Kline wrote two seminal articles on his framework theory of the days of creation, "Because It Had Not Rained"⁵⁵³ and "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony."⁵⁵⁴ Lee Irons is also an ordained minister in the

⁵⁵³ Meredith G. Kline, "Because It Had Not Rained," *Westminster Theological Journal* 20:2 (May 1958), 146-157.

⁵⁵⁴ Meredith G. Kline, "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 48:1 (April 1996), 8-9.

Orthodox Presbyterian Church and is author of a number of articles. Kline and Irons together composed the article “The Framework View” in *The Genesis Debate*.⁵⁵⁵ I will emphasize the latter article, as it may represent their most mature thinking on the subject, and it also includes rebuttals by Duncan and Hall and by Ross and Archer.

Kline and Irons are following an earlier statement of this idea by Henri Blocher, expounded in the first part of *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis*.⁵⁵⁶ Aspects of this theory are also expounded by Mark Futato⁵⁵⁷ and Mark A. Throntveit.⁵⁵⁸ Even if one does not accept the two main claims of the framework view, nonchronological and non-literal interpretation, these authors have insights into the creation events. Besides presuppositional positions that I have numbered zero, they have two main claims and three arguments for those claims for a total of five points.

(000) *Presuppositionally, Scripture has priority over science.* Kline believes that “Scripture has hermeneutical and presuppositional priority over our fallible study of general revelation.”⁵⁵⁹

(00) *Presuppositionally, since the Bible is inspired, it will not contradict itself.* “The analogy of Scripture” requires us “to adopt an interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:3 that does not conflict with Genesis 2:5-6.”⁵⁶⁰

(0) *Presuppositionally, the Bible’s purpose is covenantal and theological, so any texts with chronology will focus on their covenantal and redemptive historical purpose.* Genesis 1—2, and for that matter the whole Bible, is about “theological . . . concerns.”⁵⁶¹ “While Scripture inerrantly reports historical and chronological information it always does so with a covenantal and redemptive historical purpose.”⁵⁶² This sounds like fellow Westminster professor Daniel McCartney

⁵⁵⁵ Meredith G. Kline and Lee Irons, “The Framework View,” in David G. Hagopian, ed., *The Genesis Debate* (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux Press).

⁵⁵⁶ Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis*, trans. David G. Preston (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984).

⁵⁵⁷ Mark D. Futato, “Because It Had Rained: A Study of Gen. 2:5-7 with Implication for Gen. 2:4-25 and Gen. 1:1-2:3,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, 60:1 (Spring 1998), 1-21

⁵⁵⁸ Mark A. Throntveit, “Are the Events in the Genesis Creation Account Set Forth in Chronological Order? No,” in Ronald Youngblood, *The Genesis Debate* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999, 36-55.

⁵⁵⁹ Kline, “Framework,” 218.

⁵⁶⁰ Kline, “Framework,” 234.

⁵⁶¹ Kline, “Framework,” 217.

⁵⁶² Kline, “Framework,” 218.

statement, “The most important thing is to have the correct goal in interpretation,⁵⁶³ but that goal will also indicate method. For the NT writers, the goal was Jesus the Christ and His representative redemptive work by the cross and resurrection; the most basic methodological consideration, therefore, was to look to see how the OT spoke of Jesus’ person and work.”⁵⁶⁴ In other words, Old Testament texts have a redemptive historical purpose. So the chronology may be filtered, even dischronologized, by the redemptive historical interpretive goal. Kline continues, “The real theological message has been drowned out by its alleged sequential and chronological message.”⁵⁶⁵

One must ask if this view is indulging in the either/or fallacy—either theological purpose or chronological history.

(1) *Genesis 1 is nonchronological*. The Genesis 1 “account has been shaped, not by a concern to satisfy our curiosity regarding sequence or chronology, but by predominately theological and literary concerns.”⁵⁶⁶ Henri Blocher suggested a literary interpretation in which the days are “a modest example of anthropomorphism that is not to be taken literally. The author’s intention is not to supply us with a chronology of origins. . . . He wishes to bring out certain themes and provide a theology of the Sabbath.”⁵⁶⁷ Building on Blocher’s statements, Kline explains, “What then is the framework interpretation? It is that interpretation of Genesis 1:1–2:3 which regards the seven-day scheme as a figurative framework.”⁵⁶⁸

(1a) *The Genesis 1 framework does not specify the age of the earth or universe*. “Those who accept the framework interpretation, therefore, are not bound to any particular view of the age of the earth or universe.” “The inspired text, rightly interpreted, is simply silent with regard to the age of the earth and universe.” “Although many who hold to the framework interpretation today are also persuaded by the current evidence for an old

⁵⁶³ Greg Bahnsen disagrees with an interpretive goal, seeing a goal of Bible interpretation as circular reasoning, though he agrees with Christ’s centrality in hermeneutics. But McCartney may accept circular reasoning if it begins and ends in his theological goal for Scripture.

⁵⁶⁴ McCartney, Dan and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994).

⁵⁶⁵ Kline, “Framework,” 218.

⁵⁶⁶ Kline, “Framework,” 217.

⁵⁶⁷ Blocher, *Beginning*, 50.

⁵⁶⁸ Kline, “Framework,”

earth/universe, however such a stance is not a necessary component of the framework interpretation itself.” The reason the age of the universe is not specified is that “the measurement of upper-register time (the six days in heavenly time) is not calibrated according to the lower-register (the six days in earth time) chronometer (such as the rotation of the earth with respect to the sun).⁵⁶⁹ The six days are heavenly days, not “imaginary,” but not earth days either; therefore they do not indicate how much time passed during Genesis 1.

(1b) *Genesis 1 is in topical order, not in chronological order.* Genesis 1 “functions as a literary structure in which the creative works of God have been narrated in a topical order. The days are like picture frames. Within each day-frame, Moses gives us a snapshot of divine creative activity.” “They are narrated in a nonsequential order within the literary structure or framework of a seven-day week.”⁵⁷⁰

(1c) *Genesis 1 is eight historical nonchronological creative works.* “The eight historical creative works of God have been arranged according to other than strictly sequential considerations.”⁵⁷¹ “There are a total of *eight* distinct creative works distributed over *six* days. The last day within each triad (i.e., Days 3 and 6) contains *two* creative acts.”⁵⁷²

(1d) *Days one and four are two aspects the same event.* Repeatedly, it becomes evident that days one and four are the motive behind Kline’s idea of dischronologization of the six days. How could the luminaries have been created on day four after light on day one? “If the divinely decreed order of creative acts was dictated by concern to avoid unnecessary supernaturalism in providence [see point 5 below], then a sequential reading of Genesis 1 must be incorrect.”⁵⁷³ “The creation of the luminaries, and in particular the solar system, on Day 4 actually coincides with the creation of daylight on Day 1. Thus the text is narrated in a topical rather than a purely sequential order.”⁵⁷⁴

(1e) *Some events are in chronological order.* “We cannot conclude that *nothing* in the text has been arranged sequentially. The Sabbath of the seventh day, for example, must

⁵⁶⁹ Kline, “Framework,” 248.

⁵⁷⁰ Kline, “Framework,” 219.

⁵⁷¹ Kline, “Framework,” 220.

⁵⁷² Kline, “Framework,” 227.

⁵⁷³ Kline, “Framework,” 232.

⁵⁷⁴ Kline, “Framework,” 220-221.

follow the previous six days of creation, and man is created last due to his position of delegated dominion over all creation.”⁵⁷⁵

(1f) *Dischronologization in the form of nonsequential narratives, or narratives beginning with recapitulation are common in Scripture.* Kline and Irons claim that “nonsequential narration is a *common* occurrence in Scripture” (emphasis mine).⁵⁷⁶ They give two examples: In chapter 4 Ezra describes opposition to rebuilding the temple, and then he speaks of previous opposition to rebuilding the city. In Matthew 4 and Luke 4 the three temptations of our Lord in the wilderness are not given in the same order. The authors also cite recapitulations, such as Genesis 2 going back to the events of Genesis 1. The same kind of recapitulation occurs at the *tôlê dôt* segues, such as Genesis 5:1. Therefore, they conclude that Genesis 1 is nonsequential.

(2) *Genesis 1 is non-literal.* “The total picture of God’s completing His creative work in a week of days is not to be taken literally.”⁵⁷⁷ Kline and Irons argue that Augustine, Anselm, and Peter Lombard also held nonliteral views of Genesis 1.⁵⁷⁸ He does not mention that their views were not the same as his nonliteral view.

(2a) *The Bible may impart symbolic meaning to numbers.* The Bible gives symbolic meaning to some numbers, such as seven and forty. The symbolic use of seven “is highly significant for our interpretation of the ‘week’ of creation.”⁵⁷⁹ Exactly how this symbolic use of seven makes the seven days nonchronological is not explained. There seems to be an unstated assumption in this argument that numbers with symbolic significance indicate dischronologization.

“So there are two essential criteria defining the framework interpretation: a nonliteral interpretation of the days and a nonsequential ordering of the creative events.”⁵⁸⁰

(2b) *The “days” are metaphorical.* “Unlike day-age advocates, framework advocates give *yôm* its normal sense of an ordinary day. But then, unlike literalists, they take account of the fact that the *days* are part of an extended chronological metaphor. In all metaphors, words are employed to make a comparison between a literal referent and a metaphorical referent.”

⁵⁷⁵ Kline, “Framework,” 221.

⁵⁷⁶ Kline, “Framework,” 221.

⁵⁷⁷ Kline, “Framework,” 219.

⁵⁷⁸ Kline, “Framework,” 219.

⁵⁷⁹ Kline, “Framework,” 227.

⁵⁸⁰ Kline, “Framework,” 224.

“Thus the word *yôm* in Genesis 1 denotes an ordinary, lower-register, solar day. Yet it is being used metaphorically to describe an upper-register unit of time that is not defined by the earth’s rotation with respect to the sun.”⁵⁸¹ Then Kline argues that if the days were used metaphorically, then so were “evening” and “morning.” This is essentially the same argument, except in esoteric theological language rather than scientific language, that Schroeder maintained: he says the days were “God-days,” so they could be millions or billions of years on earth. Kline argues that the days were metaphorical because they were related to God (“upper-register”).

Next Kline and Irons offer three arguments that are numbered (3), (4), and (5) supporting their two claims listed above:

(3) *The six “days” are a literary framework in two triads.* The two-triad framework of Genesis 1 is Kline’s first argument for his two claims. He cites Arie Noordtzij, who pioneered the recognition of the two triads of days in Genesis 1 in *Gods Woord en der Eeuwen Getuigenis*,⁵⁸² and N. H. Ridderbos, who popularized Noordtzij’s seminal framework view.⁵⁸³ Kline picked up on this framework as his first argument for his two claims:

Creation kingdoms

Day 1 Light

Day 2 Sky
Seas

Day 3 Dry land
Vegetation

Creature kings

Day 4 Luminaries

Day 5 Sea creatures
Winged creatures

Day 6 Land animals
Man

The Creator King

Day 7 Sabbath⁵⁸⁴

This framework scheme emphasizes the covenantal relationship of the kings to the kingdoms and the ultimate covenantal rule of the Creator King.

(3a) *The initial creation of Genesis 1:1 occurred before the six days.*

Dischronologizing does not extend to the initial creation. “Proverbs 8:22-31 defines ‘the

⁵⁸¹ Kline, “Framework,” 251.

⁵⁸² Arie Noordtzij, *Gods Woord en der Eeuwen Getuigenis* (Netherlands: Kampen, 1924).

⁵⁸³ N. H. Ridderbos, *Is There a Conflict Between Genesis 1 and Natural Science?*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974).

⁵⁸⁴ Kline, “Framework,” 224. The reversal of Sky and Seas on day two is his.

beginning' of Genesis 1:1 as the time prior to the progressive fashioning of the world described in the subsequent six days of creation." According to Proverbs 8, "The Lord possessed me [personified Wisdom] at the beginning . . . from the antiquity of the world; When no ocean-deeps." So the beginning occurred when there were no deeps, the same word used in Genesis 1:2. The framework of six days began in Genesis 1:3, so the beginning occurred before the six days. "Proverbs 8:22-30 provides an inspired commentary on Genesis 1:1." "According to that inspired commentary, 'in the beginning' cannot be a general time-reference to the entire six-day creation period, for Wisdom explicitly placed the events of the six days *after* 'the beginning.'"⁵⁸⁵

(3b) *The "six days" were an enclosed era when God completed His supernatural creation acts.* "The framework advocates teach that the 'six days' of creation comprise a closed era within which God completed His work of creation." This era contained both fiat "supernatural acts of origination" and God's normal providence preserving what He had created. In contrast, "the post-creation era . . . is primarily (though not exclusively) marked by ordinary providence." This post-creation providence was the same kind of providence as God's providence during the creation. But God's initial supernatural creating acts ended with the seventh day, God's day of rest. That seventh day definitely concluded the six days as sequentially last.

(3c) *The Sabbath is the important part and goal of the week.* "The Sabbath is clearly the conclusion and goal of the creation week." If the Sabbath is the important part, the goal, then the six days were just metaphorical symbols. So whether or not the days were chronological misses the point. The whole week was an eschatological metaphor of God entering His rest, so "under the covenant of works" by "federal headship" in the climax of the two triads of the creation—vegetation and man—man would relate to the two trees and "be enabled to enter into the eschatological Sabbath rest of God."⁵⁸⁶

One must ask, What about the purpose in Genesis 1 of making the uninhabitable and uninhabited planet described in 1:2 inhabitable and inhabited? Kline would probably answer that my question misses the point of "the pervasive presence of the upper register" and that

⁵⁸⁵ Kline, "Framework," 244.

⁵⁸⁶ Kline, "Framework," 253.

the creation is “bound for Sabbath-consummation.”⁵⁸⁷ One could respond in turn, Isn’t your response the either/or fallacy?

(4) *In Genesis 1—2, between miraculous creation acts, God used ordinary providence involving normal cause-effect secondary means.* As his second argument for his two claims, Meredith Kline in his seminal 1958 article “Because It Had Not Rained” asked “whether the *modus operandi* of divine providence was the same during the creation era as that of ordinary providence now.” (He emphasizes that he is *not* suggesting an “evolutionary reconstruction.”⁵⁸⁸) “It will be the central contention of this article that a clear answer to that question is available in Gen. 2:5 and that that answer constitutes a decisive word against the traditional [solely extraordinary miraculous] interpretation.”⁵⁸⁹ “Verse 5 itself describes a time when the earth was without vegetation.” Then Genesis 2:5c gives the “explanation—a perfectly natural explanation . . . for the absence of vegetation at that time: ‘for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth.’”⁵⁹⁰ Now Kline brings in his observation that narratives may begin with recapitulation.

Genesis 2 reaches back into the narrative of Genesis 1 to the time before God made land plants. After the ocean and land were both in place but before land plants were created, there was a time when there was no hydrologic cycle of cloud rising and then raining upon the land. Genesis 2:5 explains that no vegetation had sprung up because there was no rain. Then God dealt with the deficiency of the lack of rain. The noun $\tau\kappa\lambda\upsilon$ (*ed*) should be translated “rain-cloud.” Dahood translated the same rare word in Job 36:27, the only other Hebrew text using this word, as “rain-cloud.”⁵⁹¹ In Job 36:27–29, the contextual causal link between “rain-cloud” and the pouring down of rain showers is obvious. The verb “to rise” in Genesis 2:6 “demands the inceptive meaning,” “began to rise.” So Kline translates Genesis 2:5-6:

Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted for the Lord God had not yet caused it to rain upon the earth (and

⁵⁸⁷ Kline, “Framework,” 253.

⁵⁸⁸ Kline, “Not Rained,” 146.

⁵⁸⁹ Kline, “Not Rained,” 147?.

⁵⁹⁰ Kline, “Not Rained,” 148?.

⁵⁹¹ Michael Dahood, “Eblaite *i-du* and Hebrew *‘ed*, ‘Rain-Cloud,’” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43 (1981), 534-538; in Kline, “Framework,” 231.

there was no man to cultivate the ground). So a rain-cloud began to arise from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.⁵⁹²

Job 36:27, combined with Genesis 2:6 (translating $\tau\kappa\lambda\upsilon\varsigma$, *e*d, as “rain-cloud”), Ecclesiastes 1:7, and Amos 5:8, describes the water cycle: “For He draws up the drops of water, They distill rain from the rain-cloud” [$\tau\kappa\lambda\upsilon\varsigma$, *e*d] (NASB except for $\tau\kappa\lambda\upsilon\varsigma$, *e*d, as “rain-cloud” rather than “mist”). “So a rain-cloud began to arise from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.”⁵⁹³ “All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again” (Ecclesiastes 1:7, NIV). “Who calls for the waters of the sea, And pours them out on the surface of the earth” (Amos 5:8, NASB).

Clouds of water rise from the sea, water the land as rain, and the water returns as streams to the sea, where the cycle is repeated. So after clouds rose and rain began to water the whole surface of the ground, that is, after the normal water cycle began to water the land, then God commanded land vegetation. Kline’s point is that the vegetation was absent until the normal providence that God also used after the six days, namely rain. God commanded this vegetation, yet the implication of Genesis 2:5–6 is that He employed ordinary non-miraculous providential means—rain—for the growth of the two listed categories of plants.⁵⁹⁴

“Moses demonstrates the tightness of the causal connection (no rain; therefore, no vegetation) in this context.”⁵⁹⁵ “The Creator did not originate plant life on the earth before He had prepared an environment in which He might preserve it without bypassing secondary means and without having recourse to extraordinary means. As such, Genesis 2:5 contains an ‘unargued presupposition,’ namely, ‘that the divine providence was operating during the creation period through processes which any reader would recognized as normal in the natural world of his day.’”⁵⁹⁶ Kline concludes that Genesis 2:5–6 “establishes the principle of continuity between the mode of providence during and after the creation period.”

⁵⁹² Kline, “Framework,” 232.

⁵⁹³ Kline, “Framework,” 232.

⁵⁹⁴ Mark Futato cogently argues that these were desert bushes that would grow with the first wet season rains and cultivated seed plants. This matches no rain and no man to work the ground. Mark D. Futato, “Because It Had Rained” *Westminster Theological Journal* 60:1, 4.

⁵⁹⁵ Kline, “Framework,” 230.

⁵⁹⁶ Kline, “Not Rained,” 149-150, quoted in Kline, “Framework,” 232.

Kline is not arguing that God used only normal non-miraculous providence in Genesis 1—2, but that God did not exclude or postpone normal non-miraculous providence for maintaining the world until after Genesis 1—2. He is arguing that along with carrying out real miraculous creation work, God very definitely acted by divine providence, employing secondary causal agents for carrying on His creation work during, as well as after, the creation week.

Kline concludes that the *presumption should be* that if an event or process, including a fiat commanded event, in Genesis 1—2 may be interpreted as operating “through processes which any reader would recognized as normal in the natural world of his day,” we should interpret that event accordingly—as an act of divine providence sovereignly employing normal secondary causal agents, rather than as an extraordinary miraculous act.

(4a) *Since God used ordinary providential means where possible, the creation of the sun in day-frame four must have coincided with and been the cause of light to earth in day-frame one.* “If the divinely decreed order of creative acts was dictated by concern to avoid unnecessary supernaturalism in providence, then a sequential reading of Genesis 1 must be incorrect. For such an interpretation would require the day/night cycle to be sustained by a supernatural providence for three days until an ordinary providential means (our current solar system) was established.”⁵⁹⁷ The reasoning is, “If the Creator was concerned to establish a natural watering system prior to creating vegetation to avoid relying unnecessarily upon extraordinary providence in His maintenance of vegetation, would we not be imputing the divine procedure with inconsistency if we suggested that the Creator was not similarly concerned to avoid unnecessarily relying upon extraordinary providence in His maintenance of daylight and the division between day and night?”⁵⁹⁸

This lack of a sun, yet day and night existing, is a dilemma for young earth creationists unless they violate the “because it had not rained” principle and instead invoke a miracle.

⁵⁹⁷ Kline, “Framework,” 232.

⁵⁹⁸ Kline, “Framework,” 232.

The framework view of Kline sees “that Day 4 is an example of temporal recapitulation: the narrator returns to events that he had previously reported but now retells in greater detail.”⁵⁹⁹

(4b) *The young earth creation theory*⁶⁰⁰ is incompatible with belief in self-consistency of Scripture. According to the sequential twenty-four-hour-days or young earth creation theory, on Sunday God created temporary light for day and night; on Monday “nothing but water was to be seen.” On Tuesday He raised land from the ocean water; but according to Genesis 2:5, there were no plants yet “because it would not rain until later in the day.” So the land that had just risen from the ocean must have been too dry for plants because there was no rain yet that day. “It must be supposed that . . . some supply of water was provided, before Tuesday was over, for by the end of the day the earth was abounding with that vegetation which according to Gen. 2:5 had hitherto been lacking for want of water.” “Such a reconstruction of a ‘Tuesday’ . . . is completely foreign to the historical perspectives of Gen. 2:5.”⁶⁰¹

“It becomes evident, then, that the [sequential] 24-hour [young earth scientific creationism or 6,000-year-old-universe] view cannot be correct since its . . . interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:3 repeatedly creates tension with the principle disclosed in Genesis 2:5-6.” To make sure we understand, Kline repeats the principle: “This principle states that the mode of divine providence during the creation period [the six days, not the initial *ex nihilo* creation] was not fundamentally different from its current mode after the creation period.”⁶⁰² “Positing extraordinary providence [miracles] between acts of supernatural origination is nothing more than an exegetical presumption. Even more, it directly contradicts the revelation of Genesis 2:5-6, which shows that the mode of divine providence between such supernatural acts of creation was the ordinary mode currently in effect today.” So when God created something, that was a supernatural originating miracle. But between these miracles originating things, God carried on the world He had created by normal providence not too dissimilar from the

⁵⁹⁹ Kline, “Framework,” 233.

⁶⁰⁰ Kline calls this group the sequential-24-hour-days theory. However, I am reviewing a dozen theories and several believe in or at least allow sequential-24-hour-days. So I have used a narrower title, the “6,000-year-old-universe theory” to distinguish this group from others who also believe in 24-hour days.

⁶⁰¹ Kline, “Not Rained,” 150.

⁶⁰² Kline, “Framework,” 233-234.

way He does today. “The analogy of Scripture” requires us “to adopt an interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:3 that does not conflict with Genesis 2:5-6.”⁶⁰³

(4c) *The young earth creation Theory invokes miracles unwarranted by the text.* Young earth creationists “must invoke *extraordinary* providence during the creation period.”⁶⁰⁴ According to the young earth creation view, essentially everything in the six days was miraculous, even when the Bible text does not indicate the miraculous. For example, Duncan and Hall in “The 24-Hour View” state, “How could all the events described in Genesis 2:5-25 have occurred on the sixth day?” “But the question before us presents no real problem, *especially if we assume the miraculous*” (emphasis added).⁶⁰⁵ They *assume* the miraculous in Adam naming the animals, etc., in Genesis 2. Concerning the land bringing forth plants in Genesis 1:12 and 2:9, young earth creationists Duncan and Hall claim that after God made the plants supernaturally, “If the events described were supernatural, then obviously, the text does not refer to the natural process of growth.”⁶⁰⁶ But, Kline explains, Genesis 2:5 says no land vegetation had sprung up, because God had not sent rain on the land. Then after God caused cloud to rise and rain to fall, then at God’s command, the earth produced vegetation.

If Kline’s exegesis is correct, then the young earth creation theory would have to posit that within a few hours after the land rose from the sea, God miraculously made the ground too dry for plants and then sent rain to remedy the miraculously dried ground; then He miraculously produced full-grown trees. “If we believe that Scripture is inspired, and therefore inerrant, we are required to adopt an interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:3 that does not conflict with Genesis 2:5-6.”⁶⁰⁷ The young earth creation theory is wrong by invoking extraordinary miracles for at least plant growth, and by extension for other events in Genesis 1—2 when the extraordinary is unwarranted by the text.

(4d) *Day four involved more than the luminaries becoming “visible.”* “The very least that transpired on the ‘day’ in question [the fourth day] is that the sun was brought into a radical new relationship to the earth wherein it began to govern earth’s times and seasons and

⁶⁰³ Kline, “Framework,” 234.

⁶⁰⁴ Kline, “Framework,” 230.

⁶⁰⁵ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” 53.

⁶⁰⁶ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” 53.

⁶⁰⁷ Kline, “Framework,” 234.

in general to affect life on earth as men now observe it to do.”⁶⁰⁸ The sun on the fourth day began functioning to earth by God’s ordinary providence just as it does today, in keeping with the principle derived from Genesis 2:5–6.

Kline adds that as an orthodox exegete, he cannot agree to a chronology of the creation of plants on the third day, but the creation of the sun on the fourth day. His solution is to reject the apparent chronology of Genesis 1.

(5) *Genesis 1–2 presents a two-register cosmology in which the days are metaphorical lower register language describing upper register realities.* Kline’s third argument for his two claims is that “the created cosmos comprises an upper and a lower register, that is, the invisible and the visible dimensions.” These “two registers are related to one another analogically.” This analogical relationship “provides the theological rationale” for the “chronological data . . . referring to a heavenly, upper-register time frame.”⁶⁰⁹ By “upper register,” he means heaven or God’s dwelling place, and by “lower register,” he means the universe including earth.

“The days of Genesis belong to the upper register” because the upper register is the “archetype” for the lower register.⁶¹⁰ The lower register term “day” “is not literal” but “used metaphorically to describe the upper register.” “The first verse of the creation narrative refers to the creation of both the upper and lower registers.” “God created the heavens (upper register) and the earth (lower register).” “On the second day the firmament of heaven is formed by a separation that occurs *within* the ‘earth’ of verse 1–2. Later, in verses 14 and 17, the sun, moon, and stars are placed in this firmament of the visible heavens, and therefore placed in the ‘earth,’ or the lower register.”

Then the lower register, as a metaphor of the upper register, is subdivided into Heaven as the “star-studded sky” and earth as the “planet.”⁶¹¹ “In verse 2 . . . the Spirit of God here is the heavenly reality that in the later unfolding of redemptive revelation found earthly expression in the Glory-cloud.” “The deep . . . is the lower register.” “The eight fiat-

⁶⁰⁸ Kline, “Not Rained, 150.”

⁶⁰⁹ Kline, “Framework,” 236-237.

⁶¹⁰ Kline, “Framework,” 239.

⁶¹¹ Kline, “Framework,” 241.

fulfillments . . . represent the royal creative commands being issued from on high by the King enthroned in the upper register.”⁶¹²

Kline draws this upper and lower register idea to his point: “Our contention, then is that the days and the evenings and mornings are to be explained as further example of lower-register language being used metaphorically in descriptions of the upper register.”⁶¹³

Therefore, he concludes, the days do not need to be taken literally as twenty-four-hour days on earth. Thus he believes he has proved “the nonliteral and nonsequential nature of the narrative,”⁶¹⁴ the two key elements of the framework theory. And he feels he must accept these two elements because he does not see how he can fit the fourth day of sun, moon, and stars with the first day of light and the third day of plants otherwise.

Finally, the week ends with God’s rest, an upper register event. Kline concludes that since the creation began with God and ended with God’s rest, both in the upper register of Heaven, then the six days between these two ends must have been upper register, too, and therefore nonliteral.⁶¹⁵

PROBLEMATIC PRESUPPOSITIONS AND CLAIMS OF FRAMEWORK THEORY

(0) *Presuppositionally, the Bible’s purpose is covenantal and theological, so any texts with chronology will focus on their covenantal and redemptive-historical purpose.* “While Scripture inerrantly reports historical and chronological information it always does so with a covenantal and redemptive historical purpose.”⁶¹⁶

Certainly Scripture has theological purpose, but Kline and Irons use this presuppositional purpose to rule out sequential chronology. This is the either/or fallacy—either theological purpose or chronological history. Most, if not all, Bible texts have a theological purpose. Cannot a text have both theology and chronology? If not, then the Bible cannot have any certain sequential chronology.

(1) *Genesis 1 is nonchronological.* The “account has been shaped, not by a concern to satisfy our curiosity regarding sequence or chronology, but by predominately theological and

⁶¹² Kline, “Framework,” 242.

⁶¹³ Kline, “Framework,” 243.

⁶¹⁴ Kline, “Framework,” 244.

⁶¹⁵ Kline, “Framework,” 245.

⁶¹⁶ Kline, “Framework,” 218.

literary concerns.”⁶¹⁷ “The Sabbath is clearly the conclusion and goal of the creation week.”⁶¹⁸ So Kline claims that “the creation of the luminaries, and in particular the solar system, on Day 4 actually coincides with the creation of daylight on Day 1. Thus the text is narrated in a topical rather than a purely sequential order.”⁶¹⁹

But if days one and four are the same event, then there are *not six days*. Thus his goal of a theological interpretation supporting the Sabbath of six days followed by a seventh day of rest makes no sense.

Ross easily answers this problem, thus eliminating Kline’s reason for his nonliteral nonchronological framework. Genesis 1:2 contradicts the notion presented in the framework essay that “Scripture employs the language of earthly time to speak of the progress of heavenly time.” The frame of reference for the six-day creation account is identified as the surface of earth’s waters. We can reasonably conclude, then, that the six-day creation events unfold in earthly time.

Here is the answer to Kline’s dilemma about light on the first day and plants on the third day, but no sun until the fourth day. God created the sun as part of the heavens in Genesis 1:1, but in 1:2 earth was cloud covered blocking out the sunlight. From the Holy Spirit perspective just above the water, at God’s command sunlight penetrated the thick dark cloud cover, thus beginning day one. Then on day four the overcast sky at least partially cleared for the first time since Genesis 1:2, allowing the luminaries to rule day and night, therefore becoming time markers of days, seasons, and years. With this progress in the days, no dischronolization is necessary.

The framework view of Kline sees “that Day 4 is an example of temporal recapitulation: the narrator returns to events that he had previously reported but now retells in greater detail.”⁶²⁰ But then is day five supposed to be a concurrent temporal recapitulation of Day 2, expanding and retelling the events “in greater detail,” and day six a recapitulation of day three, since they form a parallel framework? If that were the case, we would have only three workdays and the Sabbath, contra, Exodus 20:11.

⁶¹⁷ Kline, “Framework,” 217.

⁶¹⁸ Kline, “Framework,” 253.

⁶¹⁹ Kline, “Framework,” 220-221.

⁶²⁰ Kline, “Framework,” 233.

(2) *Genesis 1 is nonliteral*. “The total picture of God’s completing His creative work in a week of days is not to be taken literally.”⁶²¹ What Kline and Irons do not take literally is six sequential days. Kline says, “Unlike day-age advocates, framework advocates give *yôm* its normal sense of an ordinary day. But then, unlike literalists, they [framework advocates] take account of the fact that the *days* are part of an extended chronological metaphor.” “Thus the word *yôm* in Genesis 1 denotes an ordinary, lower-register, solar day. Yet it is being used metaphorically to describe an upper-register unit of time that is not defined by the earth’s rotation with respect to the sun.”⁶²²

They “give *yôm* its normal sense of an ordinary day” as a “solar day.” But then they claim that “it is used metaphorically to describe an upper-register unit of time.”⁶²³ That is double-talk—a “solar day” “not defined by the earth’s rotation with respect to the sun,” a “literal day” that is “metaphorical.”

These are the two unique and main claims of the framework hypothesis, “the nonliteral and nonsequential nature of the narrative.”⁶²⁴ Both are unfounded. However, apart from these two claims, Kline and Irons do have some insights into Genesis 1—2.

PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF THE FRAMEWORK THEORY

(3) *The six “days” are a literary framework in two triads.*

Kline very helpfully shows the parallelism in the two triads of days:

Day 1 Light

Day 4 Luminaries

Day 2 Sky
Seas

Day 5 Sea creatures
Winged creatures

Day 3 Dry land
Vegetation

Day 6 Land animals
Man

Day 7 Sabbath⁶²⁵

⁶²¹ Kline, “Framework,” 219.

⁶²² Kline, “Framework,” 251.

⁶²³ Kline, “Framework,” 251.

⁶²⁴ Kline, “Framework,” 244.

⁶²⁵ Kline, “Framework,” 224.

However, earlier interpreters saw this same relationship but did not conclude that it proves or even suggests nonchronological and nonliteral interpretation, the two key components of the framework theory. If anything, this diagram suggests orderly chronological progression. One must ask, Why should a literary organization indicate dischronolization?

(1c) *Genesis 1 is eight historical nonchronological creative works.* Kline and Irons speak of the “The eight historical creative works of God.”⁶²⁶ “There are a total of *eight* distinct creative works distributed over *six* days. The last day within each triad (i.e., Days 3 and 6) contains *two* creative acts.”⁶²⁷

Kline has rightly realized that there are eight distinct command units because the last day of each triad has two units. We can accept this insight of eight command units without accepting his dischronologization or his nonliteral interpretation.

GENERALLY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF THE FRAMEWORK THEORY

(3a) *The initial creation of Genesis 1:1 occurred before the six days.*

Kline insightfully explains: “Proverbs 8:22-31 defines ‘the beginning’ of Genesis 1:1 as the time prior to the progressive fashioning of the world described in the subsequent six days of creation.” According to Proverbs 8, “The Lord possessed me [personified Wisdom] at the beginning . . . from the antiquity of the world; When no ocean-deeps.” So the beginning occurred when there were no deeps, the same word used in Genesis 1:2. Thus the beginning occurred before Genesis 1:2 which in turn was before the six days. “Proverbs 8:22-30 provides an inspired commentary on Genesis 1:1.” “According to that inspired commentary, ‘in the beginning’ cannot be a general time-reference to the entire six-day creation period, for Wisdom explicitly placed the events of the six days *after* ‘the beginning.’”⁶²⁸

(4) *In Genesis 1—2, between miraculous creation acts, God used ordinary providence involving normal cause-effect secondary means.*

This recognition of providence is very insightful, as long as miracles are not excluded where indicated. Kline explains that God commanded vegetation, yet the implication of

⁶²⁶ Kline, “Framework,” 220.

⁶²⁷ Kline, “Framework,” 227.

⁶²⁸ Kline, “Framework,” 244.

Genesis 2:5–6 is that He employed ordinary non-miraculous providential means—rain—for the growth of the two listed categories of plants.⁶²⁹ “Moses demonstrates the tightness of the causal connection (no rain; therefore, no vegetation) in this context.”⁶³⁰ “Divine providence was operating during the creation period through processes which any reader would recognize as normal in the natural world of his day.”⁶³¹ So Kline claims that Genesis 2:5–6 “establishes the principle of continuity between the mode of providence during and after the creation period.”

Kline concludes that the *presumption should be* that if an event or process, including a fiat commanded event, in Genesis 1—2 may be interpreted as operating “through processes which any reader would recognize as normal in the natural world of his day,” we should interpret that event accordingly—as an act of divine providence sovereignly employing normal secondary causal agents, rather than as an extraordinary miraculous act.

His reasoning is cogent and his basis Scriptural.

(4b) *The young earth creation*⁶³² *is incompatible with belief in self-consistency of Scripture.*

Kline does point out some real problems in the young earth view: According to the sequential twenty-four-hour-days or young earth creation theory, on Sunday God created temporary light for day and night; on Monday “nothing but water was to be seen.” On Tuesday He raised land from the ocean water; but according to Genesis 2:5, there were no plants yet “because it would not rain until later in the day.” So the land that had just risen from the ocean must have been too dry for plants because there was no rain yet that day. “It must be supposed that . . . some supply of water was provided, before Tuesday was over, for by the end of the day the earth was abounding with that vegetation which according to Gen. 2:5 had hitherto been lacking for want of water.” “Such a reconstruction of a ‘Tuesday’ . . . is completely foreign to the historical perspectives of Gen. 2:5.”⁶³³ “The analogy of Scripture”

⁶²⁹ Mark Futato cogently argues that these were desert bushes that would grow with the first wet season rains and cultivated seed plants. This matches no rain and no man to work the ground. Mark D. Futato, “Because It Had Rained” *Westminster Theological Journal* 60:1, 4.

⁶³⁰ Kline, “Framework,” 230.

⁶³¹ Kline, “Not Rained,” 149-150, quoted in Kline, “Framework,” 232.

⁶³² Kline calls this group the sequential-24-hour-days theory. However, I am reviewing a dozen theories and several believe in or at least allow sequential-24-hour-days. So I have used a narrower title, the “6,000-year-old-universe theory” to distinguish this group from others who also believe in 24-hour days.

⁶³³ Kline, “Not Rained.”

requires us “to adopt an interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:3 that does not conflict with Genesis 2:5-6.”⁶³⁴ I, too, can see this problem in the young earth creation theory, yet without agreeing to Kline’s solution of dischronolization and nonliteral interpretation.

(4c) *The young earth creation theory invokes miracles unwarranted by the text.*

Young earth creationists “must invoke *extraordinary* providence during the creation period.”⁶³⁵ According to Duncan and Hall, young earth creationists, after God made the plants supernaturally, “If the events described were supernatural, then obviously, the text does not refer to the natural process of growth.”⁶³⁶ But, Kline explains, Genesis 2:5 says no land vegetation had sprung up, because God had not sent rain on the land. Then after God caused rain, He caused the ground to produce vegetation. The young earth creation theory is wrong by invoking miraculous plant growth. This example is only typical of the young earth creation view, which sees the events of the flood as by secondary causes but sees the events of the six days as almost entirely miraculous, a methodological inconsistency.

(4d) *Day four involved more than the luminaries becoming “visible.”*

Kline is right: “The very least that transpired on the ‘day’ in question [the fourth day] is that the sun was brought into a radical new relationship to the earth wherein it began to govern earth’s times and seasons and in general to affect life on earth as men now observe it to do.”⁶³⁷ The sun on the fourth day began functioning to earth by God’s ordinary providence just as it does today, in keeping with the principle derived from Genesis 2:5–6.

I not only agree but would add that Genesis 1 emphasizes separation. Genesis 1:1 declares that God created the heavens (which Moses understood in Deuteronomy 4:19 as “the sun, and the moon, and the stars”) and the earth. But Genesis 1:2 declares that darkness on the face of the deep, explained by Job, was caused by thick dark cloud. The sun, moon, and stars created in Genesis 1:1 were separated from their functions to earth. Then on day one, part of that separation was lifted when at God’s command diffuse sunlight penetrated to earth’s surface. On day four the rest of the separation was lifted, as the luminaries for the first time would “be” in the expanse and so could carry out their intended functions in the expanse in relationship to earth to separate and govern day and night and as signs for seasons, days,

⁶³⁴ Kline, “Framework,” 234.

⁶³⁵ Kline, “Framework,” 230.

⁶³⁶ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” 53.

⁶³⁷ Kline, “Not Rained.”

and years. “In the beginning” was the birth of the sun, moon, and stars; day one on earth inaugurated the rule of the sun’s light; and day four was the enthronement of the sun and moon to govern day and night. This fits his understanding of “kings.” If Meredith Kline understood and accepted this understanding of the text, his reason for nonliteral interpretation and nonsequential days would disappear.

I also agree that “visible” is not the point of the fourth day. None of the operative verbs mean “visible.” The command is, “Let be for lights in the expanse of the sky to separate.” The report is, “And made . . . for governing.” These are functional-relational clauses. But they are not creation clauses.

We may appreciate some of Meredith Kline’s insights into the Genesis text. But the two main points of his system—“a nonliteral interpretation of the days and a nonsequential ordering of the creative events”⁶³⁸—must be rejected.

SUMMARY OF THE FRAMEWORK THEORY

In Genesis 1:1—2:3 the first event was the initial *ex nihilo* creation of the heavens and the earth, and the last event was the Sabbath. Between the creation and the Sabbath, the six “days” of Genesis 1 are nonchronological and nonliteral. A symmetrical framework is formed by the initial creation followed by two triads of metaphorical lower register “days” describing upper register realities, culminating in the Sabbath—a 1, 3-3, 1 framework. In Genesis 1—2, between miraculous creation acts, God used ordinary providence involving normal cause-effect secondary means, such as rain resulting in vegetation. The framework interpretation eliminates the need for added miracles that do not appear in the Bible text, such as deceptive appearance of age. However, their nonliteral and nonsequential interpretation is, in my judgment, too high a price to pay for the avoidance of the dilemma of deceptive appearance of age.

8. CREATION REVEALED IN SIX DAYS THEORY

British Air Commodore P. J. Wiseman, CBE RAF (1888–1948), during a tour of duty in Mesopotamia, became interested in Mesopotamian archaeology. He discovered many

⁶³⁸ Kline, “Framework,” 224.

tablets, including four tablets of the “Babylonian Chronicle”⁶³⁹ that fixed the date of the fall of Jerusalem.⁶⁴⁰ From all these Babylonian tablets, Wiseman deduced that the format of the tablets closely matched the *tôlê dôt* units of the book of Genesis. He published his ideas about his discoveries in *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis*⁶⁴¹ and his theories on creation revealed in Genesis 1 in *Creation Revealed in Six Days*.⁶⁴² These studies were edited by his son, Donald J. Wiseman, Professor of Assyriology in the University of London, who has numerous publications of his own including *Ancient Records and the Structure of Genesis*.⁶⁴³

The creation revealed in six days theory is sometimes grouped with the vision theory, that God revealed the creation to Moses in six visions in six days, each ending in evening, night, and morning. Together Wiseman’s theory and the vision theory are put into the category “pictorial-day” theory.⁶⁴⁴ Wiseman disagrees with grouping his theory with the six visions theory because he claims that the revelation in six days was verbal in words, not visual in visions. The very words of Genesis 1 came from God. These are the claims of the revelation theory of Genesis 1.

(0) *Genesis 1:1—2:4a is from an ancient tablet source.* Wiseman gives a number of reasons why he believes Genesis 1:1—2:4a came from an ancient tablet source, originally from God’s revelation to Adam and recorded in tablet form before the time of national Israel. Wiseman reasons, Genesis 1:1—2:4a has an “absence of mythical or legendary matter that characterizes all other accounts of Creation.” Also, “all the references in this first chapter are universal in their application and unlimited in their scope.” There is “no mention of any particular tribe or nation or country, or any merely local ideas or customs.” Moreover, “There is no mention of any event subsequent to the creation of humans.” “The Babylonians and Egyptians had a tradition of the truths of creation being *revealed* to the first man. The Jews had an early tradition of these truths being revealed to both Adam and Enoch.” The text must

⁶³⁹ Anson R. Rainey and R. Stephen Notley, *The Sacred Bridge* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), photograph of tablet on p. 271.

⁶⁴⁰ Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969.), 130.

⁶⁴¹ P. J. Wiseman, *New Discoveries in Babylon about Genesis* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1936).

⁶⁴² P. J. Wiseman, *Creation Revealed in Six Days* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1948).

⁶⁴³ P. J. Wiseman and D.J. Wiseman, *Ancient Records and the Structure of Genesis: A Case for Literary Unity* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1985).

⁶⁴⁴ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 381.

be pre-Israelite for two reasons: “The term ‘Sabbath’ is not used. It is simply ‘the seventh day.’” Also, “No Israelite of a later generation would have used the plurals “us” and “our” of God in verse 26.” Finally, Isaiah 40:21 affirms that this text was from the very first, “Has it not been declared to you from the beginning [שבת, same root word as in Gen. 1:1]? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?” (NASB). So Wiseman deduced that Genesis 1:1—2:4a is very ancient, from long before Moses, who later enscripturated it. Wiseman’s conclusion may be seen as a pre-understanding, but it is based on evidence from the text and from tablets he excavated.

(1) *The ancient source of Genesis was probably eleven tablets, each ending with one of the eleven tôlêdôt colophons, all collated by Moses.* P. J. Wiseman excavated ANE clay tablets ending with a “colophon phrase” of the title and the name of the writer or owner. “A colophon is a note added at the end of an account giving particulars of the title, date, [and] name of writer or owner.” “The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as ‘the inscription or device, formerly placed at the end of a book or manuscript, and containing the title, the scribe’s or printer’s name, date and place of printing, etc.’”⁶⁴⁵ (emphasis Wiseman’s). Curt Sewell says,

Most scholars have recognized that these “*toledoth* phrases” must be important, but they have been misled by assuming incorrectly that these are the introduction to the text that follows. (Several modern translations have even garbled these phrases.) This has led to serious questions, because in several cases they don’t seem to fit. For example, Genesis 37:2 begins, “These are the generations of Jacob. ...” But from that spot on, the text describes Joseph and his brothers, and almost nothing about Jacob, who was the central character in the previous section.⁶⁴⁶

Wiseman includes photographs of Babylonian tablets, each with an *ending* colophon. One of these is the fourth tablet of the Babylonian “creation” series of six tablets, it too ending in a colophon. A common subject of the writing on these tablets was family histories and origins, ending with a colophon giving the title and author, similar to the *tôlêdôt* units of

⁶⁴⁵ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 45.

⁶⁴⁶ Curt Sewell, “The Tablet Theory of Genesis Authorship,” *Bible and Spade*, 7:1, Winter 1994.

Genesis.⁶⁴⁷ Wiseman understood from Gesenius that *tôlê dôt* meant a “history, properly of families” or “origin of the heaven and earth.”⁶⁴⁸

“Wiseman saw that the colophons in the ancient tablets always were at the end, not the beginning. He applied this idea to the *toledoth* phrases in Genesis, and found that in every case it suddenly made good sense. The text just before the phrase ‘These are the generations of . . .’ contained information about events that the man named in that phrase would have known about.”⁶⁴⁹ Wiseman concluded that the person named in the *tôlê dôt* clause “would have been the logical one to write . . . the text preceding that phrase.” So Wiseman deduced that the book of Genesis originated as a set of eleven tablets, “each of which was written by an actual eye-witness to the events described therein,”⁶⁵⁰ each ending with a *tôlê dôt* as the colophon in the Mesopotamian style. The Egyptian-style record of Joseph was added at the end.

Since the earliest written tablets go back to the third millennium B.C.,⁶⁵¹ then the recording of these tablets could have begun very early. Wiseman claims that even the first two, the *tôlê dôt* of the heavens and the earth and the *tôlê dôt* of Adam, could be quite ancient even possibly to Adam, and were passed down as oral tradition and then later written on tablets by a successor such as Noah, Terah, or Abraham. Then subsequent later narratives were written on tablets in the same Mesopotamian style, each ending in a *tôlê dôt* colophon, and added to the highly valued collection.

Wiseman proposes the following possible scenario. Each of the eleven tablets closed with a *tôlê dôt* containing the title and the eye-witness author’s name, Adam in 5:1a, Noah in 6:9a, etc., except for the unique first tablet ending in the *tôlê dôt* in Genesis 2:4a, which has no name. Implied is that God was the eyewitness narrator of the first *tôlê dôt* in Genesis 2:4a. Wiseman suggests that this first *tôlê dôt* divided into six days may have been originally on six short tablets, or possibly two symmetrically arranged tablets.

⁶⁴⁷ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 45-46.

⁶⁴⁸ H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946), #8435, 859.

⁶⁴⁹ Sewell, “Tablet,” *Spade*.

⁶⁵⁰ Sewell, “Tablet,” *Spade*.

⁶⁵¹ A tablet estimated at 3,500 B.C. was found in Harappa. BBC News, Tuesday, May 4, 1999 Published at 08:10 GMT 09:10 UK. Archaic cuneiform and proto hieroglyphics were both developing in the late third millennium BCE.

The tablets would have been highly valued, So if the first two predated the flood, presumably they would have been taken onto the ark by Noah, who would have wanted to preserve them from being lost in the flood. Then Noah wrote his tablet. Next Shem, who is consistently listed first, would have preserved these tablets and added his own tablet as well as those of Ham and Japheth. These would have been passed down to Terah and Abraham and finally through Israel to Moses. Concurrently, oral tradition must have been passed down by other descendants of Noah, who garbled the creation story and added pagan mythic elements resulting in the Babylonian, etc., versions of creation.

“Later it appears to have become the custom in Babylonia to write the story of creation on six tablets.”⁶⁵² This suggests that the Genesis 1:1—2:4a narrative may also have been written on six tablets as the verbal revelation of the six days from the Creator.

Very significantly, the longer Joseph narrative does not end in a *tôlê dôt*, because the Joseph narrative was not in the Mesopotamian sphere of writing, where tablets ending in a colophon were the norm, but in Egypt, where longer papyrus scrolls were used. In contrast to the previous narratives, the Joseph narrative contains numerous evidences of its Egyptian origin. It seems reasonable that a high official of Egypt, who would have recorded his grain records on papyrus, would have had his personal history written on papyrus.

All this suggests that Genesis was organized from ten or eleven Mesopotamian tablets (several as sub-units) each ending with the *tôlê dôt* of the title and author, plus the final Egyptian-style Joseph narrative, likely on papyrus and not ending in a Mesopotamian style *tôlê dôt*. R. K. Harrison comments on the Joseph narrative, “The remainder of Genesis deals with the Joseph narratives (Gen. 37:2b - 50:26), the Egyptian background of which has been so well attested by scholars as to make further comment unnecessary.”⁶⁵³

Such origin documents were highly valued in ANE cultures as demonstrated by their inclusion in burial sites. It is reasonable to conclude that Moses received and collated all these tablets. Moses was trained in the learning of Egypt. Egypt had interaction with Mesopotamia, as demonstrated by the fourteenth century B.C. Akkadian cuneiform Tel el-Amarna tablets,⁶⁵⁴ which were correspondence with Mesopotamia and Canaan found in

⁶⁵² Wiseman, *Revealed*, 8.

⁶⁵³ Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), 551-552; footnoted to J. S. Wright, *How Moses Complied Genesis, A Suggestion* (1946).

⁶⁵⁴ The Amarna tablets are being collocated from their eight locations by Anson F. Rainey.

Egypt.⁶⁵⁵ Wiseman concludes that it is reasonable that Moses would have learned to read cuneiform while in Egypt and expanded his cuneiform ability during his forty-year sojourn in Midian. So there is archeological evidence suggesting it is quite reasonable that Moses could have collated these narratives into the book of Genesis as the record of the origin history of the new nation of Israel. “It seems legitimate to suppose that the redactional activity was by and large the work of Moses.”⁶⁵⁶ It is reasonable to deduce that Moses’ source materials were ten or eleven tablets each ending in a *tôlê dôt* in the Mesopotamian colophon style, and the Joseph narrative papyrus.

(2) *Genesis 1 has a framework of two parallel parts, ending in the first colophon.* Genesis 1 has a framework in which “the six days fall into two clearly parallel parts. The events recorded in the last three days being parallel with the first three.” The third day has two “and God said” fiats. The sixth day also has two “and God said” fiats with two additional “and God said” instructions at the end for a total of ten “And God said” statements⁶⁵⁷ in the six days. These ten “and God said” units, possibly on two parallel tablets, match the Ten Commandments on two tablets at Sinai. “Those best acquainted with ancient Hebrew literary methods will readily recognize a feature frequent in the Old Testament of a balanced symmetry due to a repetition of thought expressed in almost synonymous words.”⁶⁵⁸ “The key to the arrangement may be seen in the words ‘without form and void’ (verse 2). In the first three days we are told of the *formation* of the heavens and earth, and in the second three days of the furnishing of the void.”⁶⁵⁹ “This special framework of the days is confined to verses 3-31 of chapter i.” “The last four verses (chapter ii. 1-4) [are] an appendix or colophon.”

(3) *The six days were normal days but were not creation days.* “I suggest that every time the days are mentioned in both these passages [Genesis 1 and Exodus 20:9-11] they are intended to be taken literally as ordinary days.”⁶⁶⁰ But then Wiseman qualifies this

⁶⁵⁵ Also Egyptians were in Babylonia, D. J. Wiseman, *Iraq* 28:154-159, F. Rainey and R. Stephen Notley, *The Sacred Bridge* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006)

⁶⁵⁶ Harrison, *Introduction* 551.

⁶⁵⁷ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 15.

⁶⁵⁸ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 15.

⁶⁵⁹ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 16.

⁶⁶⁰ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 18.

affirmation that the days were ordinary days with his idea that it is an “incorrect assumption that what God did on the six days was to CREATE all life and man”⁶⁶¹ (emphasis his).

(3a) *The geologic-day or day-age of long-day theory fails.* “The geologic ‘day’ theory” or day-age theory “does not deal with the six ‘evening and morning’ ” statements adequately. “Was each of them an indefinitely long night in which there was no light? Was the geologic night as long or almost as long as the geologic ‘day?’ ”⁶⁶² The geologic long “day” interpretation is simply wrong.

(3b) *The re-creation or gap theory fails.* “The second theory—that of six days re-creation—puts forward the idea that there has been two quite distinct creations and that these were separated by an unknown period lasting possibly millions of years.” “The second verse is said to leave room for, or to assume that, a catastrophe came upon the earth affecting the sun and moon, resulting in the earth becoming ‘darkness and waters’, chaos and ruin, involving the destruction of all plant, animal and human life.” From this destruction the fossils formed. “The remaining verses (3-31) are said to refer to the six literal days in which God re-created the earth . . . in six ordinary days of twenty-four hours each.”⁶⁶³

Wiseman responds, “Scripture gives us no information whatever about these alleged two quite distinct and complete creations separated from each other by millions of years.”⁶⁶⁴ The re-creation or gap theory is not in Scripture.

Since the two main opposing theories of the days are wrong, we have a stronger case that the days were six ordinary twenty-four-hour days. The young earth creation theory believes in six ordinary twenty-four-hour days, but is it right?

(4) *The young earth creation theory fails.* The young-earth or 6,000-year-old-universe theory is built on a misinterpretation of Exodus 20:11. Within the fourth command, Exodus 20:11 declares that what God “did” took six days—as the warrant for man’s six-day workweek followed by the Sabbath. Exodus 20:11 does not declare that God created the heavens and earth in six days. Wiseman asks, “Precisely what does the Fourth Commandment say about the seven days?”⁶⁶⁵ The King James Authorized Version translates 20:11, “For *in* six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and

⁶⁶¹ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 18.

⁶⁶² Wiseman, *Revealed*, 23.

⁶⁶³ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 23-24.

⁶⁶⁴ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 26.

⁶⁶⁵ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 31.

rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.” The *in* is italicized because it is not in the Hebrew. The Hebrew reads:

כַּיְשָׁרִים עָשָׂה ה' יְהוָה אֱתֵּרֶם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם יְשֵׁשׁ יָמִים
וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי⁶⁶⁶

in-them that all and the-sea the-earth and the-heavens [D.O.]Yahweh worked-on days six For

“First we notice that in the Hebrew version we find that the word ‘in’ does not appear.”

“Another word which needs comment is the Hebrew word *malach* translated work [“do” is *asita* (from *asah*), אָשָׂה, לְעֵשֶׂה לְעֵשֶׂה אֵת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, “do all your work (*malach*)”]. It expressly refers to ordinary work and Dr. Driver renders it business; it simply means occupation.

Delitzsch says of it, ‘It is not so much a term denoting a lighter kind of labour as a general comprehensive term applied to the performance of any task whether easy or severe.’ The idea of creation is not in any way inherent in it.”⁶⁶⁷

Now Wiseman comes to his key point:

Finally the precise significance of the word translated made must be understood, because the meaning of the passage which has caused so much difficulty is dependent upon the sense in which it is used in this verse. It is a translation of the Hebrew word *asah*, a very common Hebrew word which is used over 2,500 times in the Old Testament. On more than 1,500 occasions it is translated ‘do’ or ‘did’. The word itself does not in any way explain what the person ‘did’ or what was ‘done’. As Dr. Young says, “The original word has great latitude of meaning and application.... Yet notwithstanding that this word has such a wide application, there has been a tendency to elevate its meaning in this Fourth Commandment to the equivalent of the word ‘created’. It necessarily means no such thing. It simply says that God did something and what God did on the six days can only be discovered by the context in which the word appears. One thing however is quite clear, the Fourth Commandment does not use the word ‘bara’ or create, or say that God created the heavens and the earth in six days.”⁶⁶⁸

Wiseman explains, “The use of the word in the immediate context is illuminating:

verse 9. Six days shalt thou do (*asah*) all thy work.

⁶⁶⁶ *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia : With Westminster Hebrew Morphology*. 1996, c1925; morphology c1991 (electronic ed.) . German Bible Society; Westminster Seminary: Stuttgart; Glenside PA

⁶⁶⁷ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 31-32.

⁶⁶⁸ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 32.

verse 10. In it thou shalt not do (asah) any work.

verse 11. For in six days the Lord made (asah) the heaven and earth.”⁶⁶⁹

“If only the translators of the Authorized Version had translated the word *asah* in verse 11 in precisely the same way as they had the two preceding verses, the difficulties we have experienced would possibly never have arisen.” If *asah* had been translated consistently with its basic meaning of “do” in all three verses, the error of claiming that Exodus 20:11 forces the Genesis 1:1 creation into the six days would have been averted.

verse 9. Six days shalt thou do (asah) all thy work.

verse 10. In it thou shalt not do (asah) any work.

verse 11. For six days the Lord did work on (asah) the heaven and earth.”

Wiseman continues, “We should then have asked what the Lord did for the six days, and why He rested on the seventh day. Instead of which it has been incorrectly assumed that during the six days He was creating the earth.”⁶⁷⁰

“Further instances of the exceptionally wide meaning possessed by the Hebrew word *asah*, translated made, may be seen by reference to any good Hebrew concordance.”

Wiseman quotes Brown, Driver, and Briggs, which lists “do, make.”⁶⁷¹ Gesenius lists “(1) to labor, to work about anything (2); To make, to produce by labour.”⁶⁷² BibleWorks Strong’s lists, “(1) to do, fashion, accomplish, make 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to do, work, make, produce.”⁶⁷³

The basic meaning is to “do” or “make” in the sense of fashion. But the word is so broad that it has numerous uses including “create” in the sense of “fashion” and “perform work.”

Wiseman concludes, “It is therefore obvious that the word must be translated in the light of its context.”⁶⁷⁴ Wiseman gives an example of the use of אָשָׂה (*’āsāh*, “do, make”) in

Genesis 18:8, “the calf he [Abram] had dressed [*asah*].” “It is obvious that in such an instance as Genesis 18:8 the word *asah* is not intended to convey the idea that Abraham

either created or made the calf he was preparing for a meal.”⁶⁷⁵ The basic meaning of *asah* in

⁶⁶⁹ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 32.

⁶⁷⁰ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 33.

⁶⁷¹ Brown, *Hebrew-English Lexicon*, 793.

⁶⁷² Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, #6213, 657.

⁶⁷³ BibleWorks for Windows, Strong’s, #6213.

⁶⁷⁴ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 33.

⁶⁷⁵ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 33.

Exodus 20:11 is “do, make.” The precise meaning must be determined by the context, namely the fourth command.

But Wiseman, too, has a problematic part of his theory—his suggestion of what God “did” in those six normal days.

(5) *Genesis 1:1—2:4a was not creation in six days but revelation in six days.* “Because the six days have been misunderstood as though they were periods occupied by God in His creative acts, instead of the time occupied by Him in revealing what He had created in the infinite past, the first page of the Bible has fallen into not a little reproach, and has become a stumbling-block to many.”⁶⁷⁶

(5a) *In six days God “shewed” creation.* Wiseman turns to four King James Authorized texts that translate *asah* in their context as “shewed.”

Genesis 19:19 which thou hast shewed.

24:14 thou hast shewed kindness.

32:10 the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant.

Judges 6:17 then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.⁶⁷⁷

He then states, “If the Fourth Commandment had been similarly translated it would have read, ‘For in six days the Lord shewed the heavens and the earth and all that in them is and rested on the seventh day.’”⁶⁷⁸

(5b) *On the seventh day in Genesis 2:1–3, God ceased “shewing” creation.* “The word translated rested, like the same word in Genesis 2:3, simply means ceased, or desisted. It does not necessarily mean the rest of relaxation; for this, quite a different Hebrew word is used. In Arabic the word sabbatu means to cut off, to interrupt, and in Assyrian to cease.”⁶⁷⁹ God ceased “shewing” creation on the seventh day.

(5c) *The seventh day was for man’s rest from God’s six days “shewing” creation.* “What did God do on those six days? and why did He cease on the seventh?” “*Our Lord Himself ANSWERED IT. He declared that ‘the Sabbath was made for man’ (Mark 2:27)*” (emphasis Wiseman’s).⁶⁸⁰ “Every commentator has realized the difficulty created by the

⁶⁷⁶ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 44.

⁶⁷⁷ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 33.

⁶⁷⁸ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 33-34.

⁶⁷⁹ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 32.

⁶⁸⁰ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 35.

assumption that the seventh day was instituted by God for His own rest.” “So the answer to our second question why did God cease on the seventh day? is quite simple and unquestionable, He ceased for man’s sake in order that *man* might rest.”⁶⁸¹ “It should have been obvious to us by the very mention of the ‘evening and morning’ in those six days, and of the cessation on the seventh day, that *God was doing something with MAN during each of the six days.*” “Those six nightly periods of rest, as well as the seventh day’s rest were introduced after man had been created. Consequently the first page of the Bible must refer to six days during which God did something in relation to creation after *man was on the earth*” (emphasis Wiseman’s).⁶⁸²

(5d) *During the six days, God was “shewing,” present tense, the past creation events.* “What did God do in the presence of man for six days?” “God was saying something about creation. Each of those six days commences with ‘God said’, and it is a record of what God *said to man* as stated in verse 28, ‘And God said unto them’. The word is used in the present tense, ‘God saith’.”⁶⁸³ “It is a record of what He then said to man about creation” (all emphases by Wiseman). “I submit that it is an account of what ‘God said’ about the things ‘God made’; that, in other words, it is His revelation to men about His creative acts in time past.”⁶⁸⁴

Consequently this narrative is a series of statements to man about what God had done in the ages past. It is a record of the six days occupied by God in revealing to man the story of creation. We are told what God *said* on the first day about the separation of light from darkness, then came the evening and the morning. The second day God said how He had made the atmosphere with its waters below and above it, and on the third day how He had caused the waters to recede so that dry land appeared. It is a narrative of what ‘God said’ to man, *there is no suggestion that the acts or processes of God had occupied those six days* [emphasis Wiseman’s]. During the daylight hours of those six days God told man how in the ages past He had “commanded and it stood fast” and in such a simple way that man could understand how He had created the world and introduced life upon it.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸¹ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 36.

⁶⁸² Wiseman, *Revealed*, 39.

⁶⁸³ Actually Hebrew has “aspect,” not tense. Wiseman, *Revealed*, 39.

⁶⁸⁴ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 40.

⁶⁸⁵ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 40.

In summary, Wiseman claims that God spoke (or possibly even wrote) the Genesis 1 narrative in six parts for six days, telling Adam what He had done, rather than that God commanded the six or eight works during the six days. During the six days, man received God's spoken (or written) revelation about creation. So Wiseman claims that Exodus 20:11 means, "In six days God had revealed 'the heavens and the earth and all that in them is', and the six days occupied in this work were followed by a day of rest."

The question is, does עָשָׂה ('*āsâh*; "do, make") in the context of the fourth command, addressing working six days but not working on the Sabbath, really mean "revealed?"

(5e) *God told man about creation because otherwise man could not have known.* "It may be asked, Why should God talk to man about creation? Just because it was the one subject about which man could know nothing with certainty except God revealed it to him."⁶⁸⁶ God communicated the creation narrative so people would be inspired to worship Him (Psa. 19:1–4). Otherwise, humans would go wrong and worship the created objects (Rom. 1:21–25).

(5f) *God founded the seventh day from the beginning by this creation account.* "It has been assumed by some that God waited until the time of Moses, or even later, before revealing this account of creation. This assumption implies that God left men in the dark for a considerable period of time."⁶⁸⁷ In Mark 2:27 our Lord said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Six days work and one day rest was not meant for Israel alone but for *all* mankind. "It is noteworthy that the Fourth Commandment calls attention to the Sabbath as an already existing fact ('Remember the Sabbath day,' Ex 20:8). There are many indications in Genesis and in Babylonian records, that the Sabbath was part of the primeval revelation which received fresh sanction under Moses. Only in this way can the universality of the tradition and the precise working of the Fourth Commandment be explained."⁶⁸⁸

Therefore, God must have revealed to Adam this creation account, which ends with God resting on the seventh day, for the benefit of Adam and all his descendants from the beginning. Wiseman's unique claim is that God revealed the creation account during the six days.

⁶⁸⁶ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 42.

⁶⁸⁷ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 42-43.

⁶⁸⁸ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 44.

PROBLEMATIC CLAIMS OF THE CREATION REVEALED THEORY

(5) *Genesis 1:1—2:4a was not creation in six days but revelation in six days.* “The six days have been misunderstood as though they were periods occupied by God in His creative acts, instead of the time occupied by Him in revealing what He had created in the infinite past.”⁶⁸⁹

This novel idea is unsupported by the text. No other major theory agrees that the days were not creation days, at least in some sense. Considering that the term אִבְרָאָה (*bārā'*, create), it is used repeatedly during the six days, the claim that the days were not creation days seems difficult to sustain.

(5a) *In six days God “shewed” creation.* Wiseman excises four brief phrases that translate *asah* in their context as “shewed.”⁶⁹⁰

Rather than Wiseman’s brief English quotes, longer quotes make it clear that אָסָה (*'āsāh*; “do, make”) did not mean “revealed” a *narrative*:

Genesis 19:19 thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me
 Genesis 24:14 thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.
 Genesis 32:10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth,
 which thou hast shewed unto thy servant;
 Judges 6:17 If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign

Wiseman states, “If the Fourth Commandment had been similarly translated it would have read, ‘For in six days the Lord shewed the heavens and the earth and all that in them is and rested on the seventh day.’”⁶⁹¹

Wiseman may have been an expert in ANE archeology and cuneiform, but He seems weaker in Hebrew. In none of the four verses does “shewed” from *'āsāh* mean “reveal” a narrative text. What Wiseman’s “creation revealed” theory claims is that God revealed the six narrative texts in six days. Any of the verses would show his error, but let us take the first, Genesis 19:19: “Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown [*asah*] me by saving my life.” “Shown me” could have been translated “done for me.” The sense of *asah* in all four texts,

⁶⁸⁹ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 44.

⁶⁹⁰ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 33.

⁶⁹¹ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 33-34.

when seen in their full context, is the basic meaning “do,” not “reveal.” Wiseman’s translation of Exodus 20:11 is simply incorrect.

PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF THE CREATION REVEALED THEORY

(0) *Genesis 1:1—2:4a is from an ancient tablet source.*

Wiseman gives evidence that Genesis 1:1—2:4a came from an ancient tablet source. His inductive insight is cogently reasoned and based on evidence from the text and from tablets he excavated. I cannot vouch for this claim as a certainty, but he has given good evidence. Without proof to the contrary, I think we should be hesitant to claim there is no truth in what he is saying about source tablets.

(1) *The ancient source of Genesis was probably eleven tablets, each ending with one of the eleven tôle dôt colophons, all collated by Moses.* P. J. Wiseman excavated ANE clay tablets ending with a “colophon phrase” of the title and the name of the writer. The colophon of these tablets is very similar to the eleven units of Genesis, each ending with a *tôle dôt*. Again, I cannot vouch for this theory, but I plan to investigate it.

(2) *Genesis 1 has a framework of two parallel parts, ending in the first colophon.*

Genesis 1 has a framework in which “the six days fall into two clearly parallel parts. The events recorded in the last three days being parallel with the first three.” “In the first three days we are told of the *formation* of the heavens and earth, and in the second three days of the furnishing of the void.” “The last four verses (chapter ii.1-4) [are] an appendix or colophon.”⁶⁹² This arrangement of two parallel parts in Genesis 1 is now widely recognized.

(3) *The six days were normal days but were not creation days.* Later in this study, I will give evidence from the text that the first half of Wiseman’s claim is correct—that if we just consider the Genesis text, the six days were normal days. But I do not agree that they were not creation days.

(5e) *God told man about creation because otherwise man could not have known.* God communicated the creation narrative so people would be inspired to worship Him

God alone could have revealed the account, but that God revealed the creation narrative does not make the six creation days be six revelation days.

⁶⁹² Wiseman, *Revealed*, 16-17.

LARGELY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF THE CREATION REVEALED THEORY

(3a) *The geologic-day or day-age of long-day theory fails.*

Wiseman is correct that the “The geologic ‘day’ theory” does not fit the evening and morning statements of the six days.

(3b) *The re-creation or gap theory fails.*

“The second theory—that of six days *re-creation*—puts forward the idea that there has been two quite distinct creations and that these were separated by an unknown period lasting possibly millions of years.”

Wiseman is correct that the Scripture is silent on a first creation, a gap, and the six days being a re-creation.

(4) *The young earth creation theory fails.*

The 6,000-year-old-universe theory is built on a misinterpretation of Exodus 20:11. Within the fourth command, Exodus 20:11 declares that what God “did” took six days—as the warrant for man’s six-day workweek followed by the Sabbath. Exodus 20:11 does not declare that God created the heavens and earth in six days.

I would add that since the context of Exodus 20:11 is the whole fourth command of Exodus 20:9–11, which is about work, the meaning of אָסָה (*‘āsāh*, “do, make”) in that context is “do work.” So I would translate Exodus 20:11, “For six days Yahweh did work on the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day” (my translation). If this is correct, and I believe it is, then there is no basis in Exodus 20:11 for the young earth creation theory’s claim that the initial creation occurred on day one. God did not create the heavens and the earth “*in*” day one. I would add that God created the heavens and the earth “in the beginning,” just as the Bible in Genesis 1:1 says. What Exodus 20:11 says is that God worked six normal days and rested the seventh, which is why the Israelites, too, were to work six normal days and rest the seventh. So the work of God in six normal days is the true point of Exodus 20:11; but the initial *ex nihilo* creation in the six days (as is claimed by the young earth creation theory) is false. Wiseman cogently has given us the meaning and import of Exodus 20:11.

SUMMARY OF THE CREATION REVEALED THEORY

Mesopotamians recorded origins, genealogies, and family histories on clay tablets ending in a colophon with the title and author's name. Given the accuracy and universality of the creation data, the only plausible source of Genesis 1:1—2:4a was that God revealed to Adam the creation in six days. It would be normal for this revelation to have been recorded later on a tablet (or possibly two or six short tablets) ending in the *tôl^edôt* of the heavens and the earth, as is the case in Genesis 2:4a. Adam added a second tablet ending in the *tôl^edôt* of Adam in 5:1a. If normal Mesopotamian record-keeping was followed, a total of ten or eleven successive tablets, each with a *tôl^edôt*, plus the Egyptian Joseph narrative were the source of the Genesis material collated by Moses.

The oddity in Wiseman's theory is that he claims that the days were six day of revelation about the creation, not six days of creation.

9. GAP, RE-CREATION, RESTITUTION, OR RUIN-RESTORATION THEORY

The gap or ruin-restoration theory was presented in lectures in Scotland by Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847), a brilliant Scottish mathematician; diligent pastor, educator, and elevator of the poor of Edinburgh; irenic but steadfast theologian; university professor; and first moderator of the Free Church of Scotland. William Buckland, an English geologist and paleontologist, championed a geological view known then as Neptunism, entailing flood catastrophism that formed the basis of the catastrophe in the second stage “gap” of the theory. In 1820, he published *Vindiciae Geologiae; or the Connexion of Geology with Religion explained*, which included his reconciliation of geology and creation by the ruin-reconstruction or gap theory.

Scottish geologist Hugh Miller (1802–1856) quoted Chalmers’ lectures and at the end of his life, publishing Chalmer’s theory in *The Testimony of the Rocks*.⁶⁹³ Two decades later, George H. Pember contributed his book, *Earth’s Earliest Ages*, which is still in print.⁶⁹⁴ Merrill Unger recognized that the grammar of verse 2 precludes a gap between 1:1 and 1:2. But in order to avoid that error and yet maintain the gap theory, he sacrificed the initial *ex nihilo* creation in Genesis 1:1 and made the highly problematic claim that 1:1 referred to the re-creation in stage three of the gap theory.⁶⁹⁵ Most recently, Arthur Custance, in *Without Form and Void*, defended the gap theory’s claim that Genesis 1:2 should be translated, “And the earth had become without form and void.”⁶⁹⁶ Since 1970, I know of no major defense of the theory. Its heyday in the original Scofield Bible era seems past.

The gap theory may be summarized in three stages. The first stage is, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In the second stage or gap, the theory’s *sine qua non*, a gap of eons of time is most commonly placed between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, when God first created life, including “preadamite” pre-humans that flourished but became evil after Lucifer’s fall. As a result, the world became evil. All physical life was destroyed by God’s judgment, sometimes referred to as “Lucifer’s flood,” because in Genesis 1:2 earth

⁶⁹³ Hugh Miller, *The Testimony of the Rocks* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1857).

⁶⁹⁴ George Hawkins Pember, *Earth’s Earliest Ages*, G. H. Lang, ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1975), first published in 1876 by Hodder and Stoughton.

⁶⁹⁵ Merrill Unger, “Rethinking the Genesis Account of Creation” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 115:457 (Jan. 1958), 28.

⁶⁹⁶ Arthur C. Custance, *Without form and Void: A Study of the Meaning of Genesis 1:2* (Brookville, Canada: Doorway Papers, 1970).

was covered with water and cloud. So earth *became* formless and void, yet the fossil record remained. Third, recently in six literal restoration days God reconstituted earth and re-created new life, as in, for a second time. These are the gap theory's preunderstandings and claims:

PREUNDERSTANDINGS OF THE GAP THEORY

(0) *Pre-understanding*: $t\bar{o}h\hat{u} v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\hat{u}$ in *Genesis 1:2* means *chaos*. Except for George H. Pember,⁶⁹⁷ most gap theory advocates assume, apparently as a pre-understanding, that $\text{וַיְהִי חָשֵׁךְ וַיְהִי תוֹמָם}$ ($t\bar{o}h\hat{u} v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\hat{u}$, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) in *Genesis 1:2* means chaos. Contra the initial chaos theory and the young earth creation theory, gap theory advocates correctly recognize that $\text{וַיְהִי חָשֵׁךְ וַיְהִי תוֹמָם}$ ($t\bar{o}h\hat{u} v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\hat{u}$, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) describes the condition of earth, not of the universe. That is what *Genesis 1:2* says: “And the earth was $t\bar{o}h\hat{u} v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\hat{u}$.” But then gap theory advocates make the same error Waltke does of assuming $\text{וַיְהִי חָשֵׁךְ וַיְהִי תוֹמָם}$ ($t\bar{o}h\hat{u} v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\hat{u}$) means chaos. In a section subtitled “Order Out of Chaos,” Merrill Unger states,

If *Genesis 1:1* refers to the original creation of the universe out of nothing, *Genesis 1:2* must either be construed to be the original chaotic state in which the earth was created or to be the result of a subsequent judgment (the gap theory). But the first interpretation is contradicted by both Scripture and theology. Why should a perfect Creator create an original imperfect and chaotic earth?—the fact of which is expressly denied by revealed truth recorded in *Isaiah 45:18* and completely at variance with the ecstatically joyous dedication of the primeval earth when it came forth perfect from the Creator's hand, as described by *Job* (*Job 38:4–7*).⁶⁹⁸

Notice that in this quote, Unger *assumes* $\text{וַיְהִי חָשֵׁךְ וַיְהִי תוֹמָם}$ ($t\bar{o}h\hat{u} v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\hat{u}$) means chaos. In the whole article, he never defends this assumption. Unger correctly recognizes that the initial creation from God could not have been chaos. So gap theory advocates conclude that the only option is that the earth must have “become” chaos in a time gap at *Genesis 1:2*. Arthur Custance also assumes chaos.

Essentially, there are two possible interpretations of *Gen. 1.2*. Either it is a chaos which marks the *first* stage of God's creative activity, or it is a chaos which

⁶⁹⁷ George Hawkins Pember, *Earth's Earliest Ages* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1975), 31.

⁶⁹⁸ Merrill Unger, “Rethinking the Genesis Account of Creation” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 115:457 (Jan. 1958), 27.

resulted from some catastrophic event marring what had formerly been an orderly and beautiful world.⁶⁹⁹

Unger says, “The Genesis account . . . begins with chaos.” Both Unger and Custance simply assume chaos. They do not defend this exegetical choice. Most gap theory advocates assume that the phrase תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) means chaos, so since God did not create chaos, earth must have *become* chaos. Pember alone, among gap theorists whose work I have read, disagrees. He sees a pagan source for the idea of chaos: “The ancient poet Hesiod [perhaps about 900 B.C.] tells us that the first thing in existence was Chaos.”⁷⁰⁰ Gnostics influenced true Christianity with this same idea of initial chaos. However, does the phrase mean chaos? If תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) does not mean chaos, then the phrase “either created chaos or ‘became’ chaos” is an either/or false dilemma fallacy.

Gap theory advocate Custance recognizes stages in the creation. “The *first* stage of God’s creative activity” was the initial creation in Genesis 1:1. The second stage was “a chaos which resulted from some catastrophic event marring what had formerly been an orderly and beautiful world.”⁷⁰¹ “Verse 2 described a ruin and not a first stage in the creative process.”⁷⁰² The third stage was six literal reconstruction days in which God reconstituted the chaotic earth, and re-created all new life forms, although retaining the ancient fossil record.

HERMENEUTICS OF THE GAP THEORY

(Practice 1) *Scriptural exegesis and science should remain largely independent, but both, when correctly interpreted, will ultimately agree.*

Arthur Custance advocates independence of both science and Scriptural exegesis:

If we are once sure what a particular passage is saying, we should not allow science to determine for us—and I am speaking as a scientist—what we may believe in Scripture; nor are we to allow a clear statement of Scripture to determine what the scientist may observe in his laboratory. Demonstrable fact in the one cannot ultimately conflict with demonstrable fact in the other, though interpretations often

⁶⁹⁹ Custance, *Void*, 2.

⁷⁰⁰ Pember, *Ages*, 27.

⁷⁰¹ Custance, *Void*, 2.

⁷⁰² Custance, *Void*, 28.

do. Where a conflict of evidence seems to exist, we must search for some means of reconciliation: failing this, we need not abandon either piece of evidence if we are reasonably sure of both, but only wait for further light.⁷⁰³

Both ways of seeking truth, when correctly done, will ultimately agree—without one lording over the other. When there appears to be a conflict, we should, as Custance advises, “search for some means of reconciliation.” While seeking reconciliation, we should not force an early artificial agreement before we sufficiently understand both science and Scripture on the subject.

CLAIMS OF THE GAP THEORY

(1) *During stage one, in the beginning God created the orderly heavens and earth—before the six days, not in the six days.* Most gap theory advocates take Genesis 1:1 literally at face value—“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” This *ex nihilo* act by God occurred before the six days. “We are told that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; but the Scriptures never affirm that He did this in the six days.”⁷⁰⁴ As far as I know, only one major theory actually claims that God created the heavens and the earth within the six days—the problematic young earth creation theory—based on their fatally flawed misinterpretation of Exodus 20:11. Most gap theory advocates and almost all other interpreters correctly recognize that God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning before the first of the six days, just as a plain reading of Genesis 1:1–3 states.

(1a) “*Bārā*” *creation was different from six-day primarily “āsāh” fashioning work, so the young earth creation theory’s claim that the terms are often “used interchangeably”⁷⁰⁵ is wrong.* “The work of those days was . . . quite a different thing from the original creation.” By the *bārā*’ creation in Genesis 1:1 we understand that “the Universe is not eternal and self-existent, but was originally created by the power of the Almighty.”⁷⁰⁶ “*Asah* is generally used in connection with them [the work of the six days].” “Now *asah* signifies to make, fashion, or prepare out of existing material; as for instance, to build a ship, erect a house, or prepare a meal.”

⁷⁰³ Custance, *Void*, 3.

⁷⁰⁴ Pember, *Ages*, 29.

⁷⁰⁵ Ham, *Answers*, 170.

⁷⁰⁶ William Buckland, *Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology*, Vol. 1, Chapter 2, 1836; Volume VI in *The Bridgewater Treatises*; in Custance, *Void*, 27.

Pember adds that the six days involve two בָּרָא (*bārā'*, create) acts. “God is said to have created the inhabitants of the waters and the fowls of heaven.” This was the first introduction of animal life in which, unlike plants, God בָּרָא (*bārā'*), created, a “life force.” “Just in the same way man is said to have been created, though in the second chapter we are expressly told that his body was formed from dust (Gen. 1:27; ii:7).”⁷⁰⁷ Adam’s spirit was בָּרָא (*bārā'*), created out of nothing; but the verb in 2:7, “*yatzar*, which means to shape,” indicates that God shaped Adam’s body from already existing materials. So there is a difference between the בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) creation of the heavens and earth out of nothing, creation of soulful animal life, and creation of the physical-spiritual man (his spirit not out of material); and the עָשָׂה (*‘āsāh*, “do, make”) forming works during the six days, such as God causing trees to “make” fruit. So the young earth creationists’ claim that the two terms are often “interchangeable” is fundamentally wrong.

(1b) *God created the orderly heavens and earth, so the young earth creation claim that God created merely their raw materials in 1:1 is wrong.* “God, then, in the beginning created the heaven and the earth, not merely the materials out of which they were afterwards formed.” “The heavens mentioned in the first verse of Genesis is the starry heaven, not the firmament immediately surrounding the earth.”⁷⁰⁸ God created the orderly starry heavens and earth, not chaotic raw materials, by His *ex nihilo* work described by the verb בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) in Genesis 1:1. The young earth creationists are wrong in their claim that only the raw materials of the universe, which they call “earth,” were created in Genesis 1:1 and that the heavens were *created* on day four and planet earth *created* at an unstated time during the six days, both from those raw materials.

(1c) *Genesis 1:1 was the first event, before the six days, so the young earth creation claim that 1:1 took place in the six days about 6,000 years ago is wrong.* Genesis 1:1 is “a statement of the first event in the record.” That event took place before Genesis 1:2 and occurred before day one, which began in Genesis 1:3. Pember further explains, “We are told that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; but the Scriptures never affirm that He did this in the six days.”⁷⁰⁹ Custance agrees that “the work of the six days . . . began

⁷⁰⁷ Pember, *Ages*, 29.

⁷⁰⁸ Pember, *Ages*, 30.

⁷⁰⁹ Pember, *Ages*, 29.

in verse 3.”⁷¹⁰ Custance quotes Hugo St. Victor (1097–1141), prior of the Augustinian monastery of Paris, who maintained that the initial creation took place before the six days but that earth was in a state of “*confusione*.” Hugo further claimed that Scripture does not clearly reveal the time length of this *tōhū v^ābōhū* state of earth: “Quandiu autem in hac informitate sine confusione permanserit, scriptura manifeste non ostendit.” (“But how long in this state of confusion [earth] continued, Scripture does not plainly show.”) Custance then cites Thomas Aquinas (1226–1274), who also held the view that the creation took place before the six days. St. Thomas stated, “Sed melior videtur dicendum quod creatio fuerit aute omnem diem.”⁷¹¹ (“It seems better to maintain that creation was prior to any day.”) However, neither Hugo nor Thomas was a gap creationist. Both Hugo’s and St. Thomas’s statements fit Biblically undated earth creation (UEC), which I, too, advocate. John Harris in 1847, in *The Pre-Adamite Earth*, explained why Genesis 1:1–2 took place prior to, rather than during, the six days:

Now, that the originating act, described in the first verse, was not meant to be included in the account of the six Adamic days, is evident from the following considerations: first, the creation of the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth days begins with the formula, “And God said.” It is only natural, therefore, to conclude that the creation of the first day begins with the third verse where the said formula first occurs, “And God said, ‘let there be light.’” But if so, it follows that the act described in the first verse, and the state of the earth spoken of in the second verse, must both have belonged to a period anterior to the first day.⁷¹²

Thomas Chalmers, an early gap theorist, added, “The writings of Moses do not fix the antiquity of the globe.”⁷¹³ We need not agree with the gap theory to recognize that the young earth creation theory’s claim that Genesis 1:1 occurred *in* the six days and, therefore, the universe *must be* about 6,000 years old is wrong.

(1d) *Time passed before day one in Genesis 1:3.* Custance points out that even before the gap theory, Hugo and St. Thomas “would not have agreed with Ussher that Creation

⁷¹⁰ Custance, *Void*, 18.

⁷¹¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Sententiarum, Book II*, Distinction xiii, Article 3, “Ad Terium;” in Custance, *Void*, 22.

⁷¹² John Harris, *The Pre-Adamite Earth* (London: Ward & Co., ca. 1849, republished G. S. Blanchard, 1860), 354; in Custance, *Void*, 27.

⁷¹³ Thomas Chalmers quoted in Hugh Miller, *The Testimony of the Rocks* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1857), 108; in Custance, *Void*, 26.

occurred 4000 B. C. They might very probably have assented to his chronology as applied to the creation of *Adam* but they would have set the creation of the Universe (the heavens and the earth) further back in time by some unstated amount. Genesis 1:2 does NOT represent the condition of things immediately after the initial creation . . . but some time later.”⁷¹⁴ That time passed before day one is not unique to the gap theory.

The preponderance of gap theory advocates and the popular Scofield Bible claim that time passed *between* Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. However, there are a few exceptions. William Buckland believed the time period took place *during* Genesis 1:1 because the beginning was a period of time. “The word ‘beginning’ as applied by Moses [in Genesis 1:1] expresses an undefined period of time.”⁷¹⁵ Unger proposes that the gap occurred *before* Genesis 1:1 and that 1:1 describes the re-creation or stage three of the gap theory. Pember seems to believe in a gap of time *during* Genesis 1:2. This total lack of consensus suggests there is a fundamental problem in the “gap” of the gap theory. The obvious solution is that no “gap” existed.

(1e) *Genesis 1:2 describes the tōhû v^ābōhû condition of “the earth” before the work of the six days, so the young earth creation (YEC) claim of a chaotic “universe” is wrong.* Genesis 1:2 changes the subject from “the heavens and earth” to the condition of “the earth,” so the six days “did not affect the sidereal heaven, but only the earth and its immediate surroundings.” Therefore, the fourth day did not involve not the *creation* of the heavens. The initial chaos and young earth theories’ claim that Genesis 1:2 says all the universe was תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) is completely wrong. Genesis 1:2 explicitly says, “And the earth was tōhû v^ābōhû.”

(1f) *Gap theory authors differ whether or not tōhû v^ābōhû means chaos.* While most gap theory advocates claim that תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) means chaos, G. H. Pember claims that “chaos” is the wrong meaning. Pember says that the translation of Genesis 1:2, “the earth was without form, and void,” is “a glaring illustration of the influence of the chaos-legend.”⁷¹⁶ The meaning of תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) is “desolation” and “that which is empty.” “Now these two words are found together only in two other passages.” “In a prophecy of Isaiah, after a fearful description of the fall of Idumea [Edom]

⁷¹⁴ Culance, *Void*, 22.

⁷¹⁵ “William Buckland,” *Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology*, Vol. 1, Chapter 2, page number unstated, 1836; Volume VI in *The Bridgewater Treatises*; in Culance, *Void*, 26.

⁷¹⁶ Pember, *Ages*, 31.

in the day of vengeance, we find the expression ‘He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones—or it should be translated, the plummet—of emptiness’ (Isa. Xxxiv. II).”

Pember explains, “Now ‘confusion’ and ‘emptiness’ are, in the Hebrew, the same words as those rendered ‘without form, and void.’” In the second passage, Jeremiah describes a similar military “devastation of Judah and Jerusalem.”⁷¹⁷ “We see, therefore, that the Hebrew word *tohu* signifies ‘destruction’ or ‘that which is desolate;’ and *bohû* ‘emptiness’ or ‘that which is empty,’ probably with reference to the absence of all life (‘I beheld, and, lo, there was no man,’ etc.).” So the phrase “And the earth was *tōhû vābōhû*” means that planet earth (not the universe) was “desolate” and “empty” “of all life.” תְּהוֹ וּבוֹהוּ (*tōhû vābōhû*) does not mean the universe was chaos. Planet earth was desolate and empty of life. The young earth theory’s claim that “earth” was unformed chaotic matter throughout space is wrong.

(1g) *Genesis 1:2 shows that 1:1 is not a summary, so the summary or title theory is wrong.* Pember explains, “For if it [1:1] were a mere summary, the second verse would be the actual commencement of the history and certainly would not begin with a copulative.” But Genesis 1:2 does begin “And the earth was,” consisting of the *vav/waw* prefixed noun and “to be” verb about the condition of the earth at some time toward the end of the initial creation time in 1:1. “A good illustration of this may be found in the fifth chapter of Genesis (Gen. v. I).” Genesis 5:1 begins, “This is the book of the generations of Adam.” This clause is a summary. The same is true for the summary in Genesis 2:4a. In both cases, “The next sentence begins without a copulative,” but rather with תְּחִלָּה (*bēyôm*, “when”) followed by the action verb.⁷¹⁸ The syntax of Genesis 1:1 does not match these summaries in 2:4a or 5:1a. Nor does the syntax of Genesis 1:2 match the succeeding clauses in 2:4b or 5:1b. Therefore, the grammatical evidence is against 1:1 being a title or summary, and then the first act in verse 2.

(2) *During stage two, during a time gap at Genesis 1:2, earth became chaos because of Lucifer’s fall and God’s judgment.* Stage two in this three-stage gap theory involves a huge time gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 during which life flourished. But because Lucifer fell

⁷¹⁷ Pember, *Ages*, 31.

⁷¹⁸ Pember, *Ages*, 31.

into evil, God judged him, the earth, and its inhabitants. Genesis 1:2 is understood as a sequential clause, as the next event in which earth “became” *tohu vbohu*. The sin and fall of Satan in Isaiah 14:12–17 is placed between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. As a consequence of Satan’s sin, God judged the earth, destroying all life, but leaving the fossil record.

(2a) *The verb “was” in Genesis 1:2 should be translated “became,” so earth “became tōhû vābōhû.”* Genesis 1:2 should be translated “And the earth became *tōhû vābōhû*.” “The verb translated ‘was’ is occasionally used with a simple accusative in the sense of ‘to be made’ or ‘became.’”⁷¹⁹ Gap theory advocates cite several examples of the verb הָיָה (hāyāh, “to be”) being translated as “became.” Custance points to Genesis 3:20, which in the NIV renders הָיָה (hāyāh) as “would become”: “Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become [הָיָה (hāyāh) from הָיָה (hāyāh), “to be”] the mother of all the living.” Pember tells us that Lot’s wife “became [יָהָיָה (tēhī) from הָיָה (hāyāh), “to be”] a pillar of salt” (Gen. 19:26). Then Pember claims, “We may therefore adopt it [the “became” meaning from Gen. 19:26] and render [Gen. 1:2], ‘And the earth became desolate and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.’”⁷²⁰ Arthur Custance goes to great lengths in his book *Without Form and Void: A Study of the Meaning of Genesis 1:2* to attempt to establish that הָיָה (hāyāh) in Genesis 1:2 might mean “had become.” Both Custance and Pember establish that “became” or “had become” is within the semantic range of some forms of הָיָה (hāyāh), “to be”; but neither, in my opinion, establishes that meaning in Genesis 1:2.

Also, both Pember and Custance argue that according to Isaiah 45:18, “God did not create the earth a *tohu*.”⁷²¹ God did not create earth desolate. “We see, then, that God created the heavens and earth perfect and beautiful in their beginning, and that at some subsequent period, how remote we cannot tell, the earth had passed into a state of utter desolation, and was void of all life.” “Not merely had its fruitful places become a wilderness, and all its cities been broken down, but the very light of its sun had been with drawn.” “The ruined planet, covered above its very mountain tops with the black floods of destruction, was rolling though

⁷¹⁹ Pember, *Ages*, 32.

⁷²⁰ Pember, *Ages*, 32.

⁷²¹ Pember, *Ages*, 32.

space in a horror of great darkness.”⁷²² By this “Lucifer’s flood,” God brought judgment, so earth “became” תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”).

(2b) *Lucifer was head of earth’s ancient “preadamites” and animal life in a time gap between 1:1 and 1:2.* “But who were these ancient possessors of the lands now given to us?” “It is our own great enemy, the Prince of this World and of the Power of the Air.”⁷²³ Satan, or Lucifer, alone holds the title “Prince of this World,” a title that Jesus attributed to him in John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11. In Ephesians 2:2 Paul calls him “the Prince of the Power of the Air.”⁷²⁴ Pember suggest Satan’s power extended to the Moon, and its desolation must have originated from him.⁷²⁵

Pember has a strange interpretation of Psalm 82. The normal interpretation of this unusual Psalm is that God will stand to pronounce sentence in the future Judgment Day. Variations of that normal interpretation are that the future judgment will be on evil spirits who were behind the Canaanite gods⁷²⁶ and/or the evil human rulers that these gods were behind.⁷²⁷ The Psalm is presented in the chiasmic form of a lawsuit.⁷²⁸ But Pember has a novel interpretation. Pember says that Psalm 82 is about God’s judgment in the ancient past in the gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. In that ancient time God judged these spirit rulers (led by Lucifer) of earth for their ancient evil rule over preadamites. The result in Psalm 82:7 was darkness and the foundations of earth being shaken, so, Pember says, earth “became” tōhû v^ābōhû between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.

Pember then turns to Ezekiel 28:11–19. He says this passage refers to one who is “possessed and energized by the Devil in person. And thus he will be a compound being, partly human partly superhuman; at once the king of Tyre and the Anointed Cherub that covereth; a travesty by Satan of the incarnation of our Lord.”⁷²⁹ In Ezekiel 28, this being came to Eden as a minister of God. “Hence the Eden of this passage must have been of a far earlier date,” a preadamite Eden in the “gap” between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. The decorations

⁷²² Pember, *Ages*, 34.

⁷²³ Pember, *Ages*, 36.

⁷²⁴ Pember, *Ages*, 37-38.

⁷²⁵ Pember, *Ages*, 37.

⁷²⁶ Willem VanGemeren, “Psalms” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 535-536.

⁷²⁷ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 296-299.

⁷²⁸ Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* of Word Biblical Commentary, Gordon Wenham, ed. (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), unpaginated in Logos Bible Software, Psalm 82.

⁷²⁹ Pember, *Ages*, 49.

described in Ezekiel 28 were as of a royal or a priest or an angelic minister of God. “Satan as the great governing head and the viceroy of the Almighty, assisted by glorious beings of his own nature, ruled over the sinless dwellers upon earth.”⁷³⁰ “The next verse shows that God is not the Author of evil (Ezek. xxviii. 15). For even the Prince of Darkness was by creation perfect in all his ways, and so continued, until iniquity was found in him and he fell.”⁷³¹ “Then, doubtless corruption appeared among his angels, and so descended to those who were in the flesh. How long God bore with this; what warnings He gave; whether any availed themselves of His mercy,”⁷³² we do not know. But following this fall into sin by Satan, the fallen angels, and the “preadamite” race was the “preadamite destruction.”⁷³³ So the earth “became” תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”).

(2c) *Lucifer’s sin started death of animals; Adam’s sin started death of Adam’s race.* The Bible speaks of “him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). The devil had the power of death, both spiritual and physical, as is evident by Adam’s fall, resulting in both spiritual and physical death. Lucifer was given headship over this world as “the prince of this world” until his headship and death-power was taken away by Christ’s death. Death came to this world under Lucifer’s headship at Lucifer’s sin.

Death came to the human race under Adam’s headship at Adam’s sin. Romans 5:12 says, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Originally, by only “one man sin entered into the world”; that is, by Adam as sin’s human initiator. But we know that sin was already present before Adam’s sin, because fallen Lucifer was present in the serpent, one of his subjects, speaking deception. There was already something wrong with the serpent before Adam’s sin.

So sin previously entered the world through Lucifer, who is not a man. Romans 5:12 declares that death spread specifically to *all men* (not all men and animals) from Adam’s sin. But Romans 5:12 presents the general principle that “death” is “through sin” (Rom. 8:2; Jam. 1:15). Two beings introduced sin into the world: Lucifer, head over the world and its non-human life, and the man Adam, head of the human race. By Adam, “death spread to all men.”

⁷³⁰ Pember, *Ages*, 55.

⁷³¹ Pember, *Ages*, 51.

⁷³² Pember, *Ages*, 55.

⁷³³ Pember, *Ages*, 61.

The curse of Adam's sin does not mention animal death, but only human death: "to dust you [Adam, and so Adam's race] shall return." Humans die because Adam, head of the human race, introduced sin. We may deduce that animal death is *not* mentioned in the curse because animals, including the serpent under Lucifer, were already suffering death. Since Adam's sin explicitly specified only human death, and Hebrews 2:14 says the devil has "the power of death," we may deduce that animal death entered the world by Lucifer's sin. If this is so, then fossils come from real animals that died because Lucifer introduced sin into the world. What God made was "very good"; what Lucifer and Adam made was evil, resulting in animal death and human death respectively.

(2d) *Earth was judged because of the sin of Lucifer and the "preadamites."* "Sin must have been the cause of this hideous ruin." "For as the fossils clearly show, not only were disease and death—inseparable companions of sin—then prevalent among the living creatures of the earth, but even ferocity and slaughter."⁷³⁴ So all that God made was good, just as all that God does today is good. But by Lucifer's sin, death came to animals just as by Adam's sin death came to humans—death that continues even today.

(2e) *Tōhû vābōhû in Isaiah 34:11 and Jeremiah 4:23 were judgment texts, so tōhû vābōhû in Genesis 1:2 must have been God's judgment too.* Gap theory advocates claim that since Isaiah 34:11 and Jeremiah 4:23, the only other texts containing *tōhû* and *bōhû*, were judgment passages, then Genesis 1:2 must have been a judgment passage too. So God's judgment produced chaos in Genesis 1:2.

(2f) *Fossils came from "preadamite" life between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2; therefore that ancient life was unrelated to today's life, which was created new during the six days. This explains the fossil record.* "We have before seen that neither the plants of the Third nor the creatures of the Fifth and Sixth days have anything to do with the fossilized remains bound in the earth's crust; because the crust is assumed to have been formed before the great preadamite catastrophe."⁷³⁵ By the "great preadamite catastrophe," Pember means his proposed destruction between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. By the time of Arthur Custance, the science of genetics had developed, so Custance explains that there was no genetic connection between the life before the catastrophe and the newly created life from the six days. The

⁷³⁴ Pember, *Ages*, 34.

⁷³⁵ Pember, *Ages*, 69.

value in this explanation is that at that time it seems to explain the fossil record yet leave creation intact.

(3) *During stage three God restored planet earth and re-created all new life kinds in six normal days, but He left the ancient fossil record that resulted from His judgment.*

William Buckland was influenced by Louis Agassiz's ice age theory. Pember follows in that thinking. "Now the withdrawal of the sun's influence had probably occasioned that glacial period." "No animal or vegetable could resist such a frost."⁷³⁶ "The ice must have broken up—perhaps through some development of the earth's internal heat, which in its convulsive struggles may also have displaced the bed of ocean. Thus the whole globe was covered with water, on the surface of which the spirit of God was already brooding."⁷³⁷ The days were "six days of restoration."⁷³⁸ They were six normal day-night cycle days, because with "a numeral" "it can only be used in its literal acceptance of the time which the earth takes to make one revolution upon its axis." "It is clear, therefore, that we must understand the Six Days to be six periods of twenty-four hours each."⁷³⁹ The six days' twenty-four-hour length is supported by Exodus 20:11 and by evening and morning.⁷⁴⁰

(3a) *The six days were normal day-night cycle days, so the long day or day-age theory is wrong.* The six days were six normal day-night cycle days. "Doubtless the word 'day' is sometimes used of prolonged periods, as in the expression 'the day of temptation in the wilderness,' and many others." Pember explains, "But whenever a numeral is connected with it [יָוֹם, *yôm*] the meaning is at once restricted thereby, and it can only be used in its literal acceptance of the time which the earth takes to make one revolution upon its axis."⁷⁴¹ Regarding the day-age view, Pember asks, "Was each geologic age divided into two long intervals, one all darkness, the other all light?"⁷⁴² If so, how could plants survive? The twenty-four-hour length of the days is also supported by "six days" work in Exodus 20:11. The claim for long geological era "days" in the day-age theory is wrong.

⁷³⁶ Pember, *Ages*, 63.

⁷³⁷ Pember, *Ages*, 64.

⁷³⁸ Pember, *Ages*, 63.

⁷³⁹ Pember, *Ages*, 65.

⁷⁴⁰ Pember, *Ages*, 66.

⁷⁴¹ Pember, *Ages*, 66.

⁷⁴² Pember, *Ages*, 65.

(3b) *On day one, God commanded, "Light be."* "The command went forth 'Light be.' " "God called the light day and the darkness night and that the evening and the morning were the First Day."⁷⁴³

(3c) *On a second day, God commanded the atmosphere.* On the second day at God's command "the firmament, or atmosphere which we breathe, was formed," "inserted" between the water above and the ocean water upon the earth.⁷⁴⁴ "In twenty four hours the firmament was completed."⁷⁴⁵

(3d) *On a third day, God gathered the sea, and dry land appeared; then He caused the land to sprout vegetation.* The "grand movement" causing land to rise is described in Psalm 104:6–9 (apparently translated by Pember):

6. With the deep as with a garment Thou didst cover it,
Above the mountains did the waters stand,
7. At Thy rebuke they fled,
At the voice of Thy thunder they hasted away—
8. The mountains rose, the valleys sank—
To the place which Thou hadst established for them.
9. Thou hast set them a bound which they cannot pass,
That they turn not again to cover the earth.

This third day did not involve the "creation" of dry land but its rise from the ocean, "literally, 'be seen.'" "The mountains rose, the valleys sank."⁷⁴⁶

"On the same day the word of God went forth a second time, and the now liberated soil began to cover itself with a garment of vegetation."⁷⁴⁷

(3e) *On a fourth day, God established earth's relations with the heavenly bodies so they could serve their purposes to earth.* "It remained only to establish its [earth's] relations with the heavenly bodies." God "apparently, so altered or modified the firmament" to bring about this relation of the heavenly bodies to the earth. "Now we must carefully observe that God is not said to have created these light-holders on the Fourth Day, but merely to have made or prepared them. They were created, as we have seen, in the beginning." "It was

⁷⁴³ Pember, *Ages*, 65.

⁷⁴⁴ Pember, *Ages*, 66.

⁷⁴⁵ Pember, *Ages*, 67.

⁷⁴⁶ Pember, *Ages*, 67.

⁷⁴⁷ Pember, *Ages*, 68.

doubtless around its [the sun's] mass that the earth was revolving from the first." The stars were "not created" on the fourth day either, because "the morning stars were admiring witnesses when God laid the foundation stone of the earth, and sang together for joy at its completion (Job xxxviii.4-7). They must, therefore, have been preexistent." The fourth day's work "had reference only to . . . our firmament, to the purpose which they [the luminaries] were to serve in regard to our earth."⁷⁴⁸

The mechanism is stated in the Scofield Reference Bible: "The sun and moon were created 'in the beginning.' The 'light' of course came from the sun, but the vapor diffused the light. Later the sun appeared in an unclouded sky."⁷⁴⁹

(3f) *On a fifth day, God caused the waters to swarm with living creatures and flyers to inhabit the air.* For the fifth day, Pember says "the literal rendering" is, "Let the waters swarm with swarms, with living creatures."⁷⁵⁰ And for the second part, "And let fowl fly above the earth in the face of the firmament of heaven." He concludes, "Sea and air were thus filled with life."⁷⁵¹

(3g) *On the sixth day, God caused the land to produce three classes of life and created man.* God caused the land to produce "three classes of living creatures—cattle or domesticated animals, creeping things, . . . and beasts of the field or wild roaming animals." Then God made man "in His image and after His likeness."⁷⁵² These were the "Six Days of restoration."⁷⁵³

(3h) *God instituted rest on the seventh day.* "Then follows the institution of the Sabbath on the Seventh Day." Thus, a day of rest in each week "was no special ordinance for the Israelite, but a law of God for all the dwellers upon earth from the days of Adam."⁷⁵⁴

(3i) *The "generations" statement in Genesis 2:4a ends this first narrative.* "This wondrous history closes with a summary of the subject and an introduction to the next part in these words: 'These are the generations of the heavens and the earth.' " "Here the creation of the heavens and earth, that is, the whole universe, refers, of course, to the creation in the

⁷⁴⁸ Pember, *Ages*, 68.

⁷⁴⁹ *New Scofield Reference Bible* (New York; Oxford University Press, 1984), 1, footnote 7.

⁷⁵⁰ Pember, *Ages*, 69.

⁷⁵¹ Pember, *Ages*, 69.

⁷⁵² Pember, *Ages*, 71.

⁷⁵³ Pember, *Ages*, 72.

⁷⁵⁴ Pember, *Ages*, 71.

beginning,”⁷⁵⁵ in Genesis 1:1. The following text regarding vegetation in 2:5–6 is a “special allusion to the world of the Third Day.”⁷⁵⁶

(3j) *Genesis 1 and 2 are not contradictory.* “While chapter one gives a continuous history of the week,” in chapter two “reference is made to other works of the Six Days only when . . . connected with the main subject, and without any regard to the order in which they were performed.” Then any alleged discrepancies disappear.

So the gap theory may be summarized as three stages. First, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Second, a gap of many millions of years occurred between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. During this gap God created all kinds of “prehistoric” life including “preadamites,” who became evil after Lucifer’s fall. Eventually God judged Lucifer and all the first created life. So earth *became* formless and void, yet the fossil record remained. Third, recently in six literal restoration days God reconstituted earth and re-created life.

PROBLEMATIC CLAIMS OF THE GAP THEORY

The entire second stage of the gap theory inserted between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 has little basis in Scripture. But there is also an erroneous pre-understanding on which the gap theory begins.

(0) *Pre-understanding: Tōhû v^ābōhû in Genesis 1:2 means chaos.* Most gap theory advocates assume that תְּהוֹם וְבוֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) in Genesis 1:2 means chaos, so since God did not create chaos, earth must have *become* chaos.

Pember alone, although a gap advocate, recognizes the pagan rather than Biblical source for the idea of chaos. Instead of advocating chaos, he correctly explains, “The Hebrew word *tohu* signifies ‘desolation,’ or that which is desolate;’ and *bohû* ‘emptiness,’ or ‘that which is empty,’ probably with reference to the absence of all life.”⁷⁵⁷ But Pember seems to be unique in this view. All other gap theory advocates whose work I have read assume chaos. Earth had to have *become* chaos, because God would not have created chaos.

(2) *In stage two, during a time gap at Genesis 1:2, earth became chaos because of Lucifer’s fall and God’s judgment.* Stage two in this three-stage gap theory entails a huge

⁷⁵⁵ Pember, *Ages*, 71-72.

⁷⁵⁶ Pember, *Ages*, 73.

⁷⁵⁷ Pember, *Ages*, 32.

time gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, involving a first creation and then judgment of life, but leaving the fossil record.

I am not alone in suggesting that this gap is inserted, not on the basis of Scripture, but to accommodate the fossil record. But let us examine the specific claims that underlie this *sine qua non* second stage of the gap theory.

(2a) *The verb “was” in Genesis 1:2 should be translated “became,” so earth “became tōhû v^ābōhû.*” “The verb translated ‘was’ is occasionally used with a simple accusative in the sense of ‘to be made’ or ‘became.’”⁷⁵⁸ Lot’s wife, we are told, “became a pillar of salt” (Gen. 19:26). “We may therefore adopt it [the “became” meaning from Gen. 19:26] and render [Gen, 1:2], ‘And the earth became desolate and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.’”⁷⁵⁹

I must respond that this verb $\text{וַיְהִי} \text{ (} \textit{va}^{\text{e}}\textit{hî} \text{)}$ in Genesis 19:26 is qal *imperfect*; whereas in Genesis 1:2 the verb $\text{הָיָה} \text{ (} \textit{hāy}^{\text{e}}\textit{tā}^{\text{h}} \text{)}$, “was”) is qal *perfect*. The imperfect may indicate “became,” whereas the perfect in Genesis 1:2 is correctly translated “was” as a “state”⁷⁶⁰ or “state of being.”⁷⁶¹ In Genesis 1:2 the state of the earth “was” $\text{וַיְהִי} \text{ (} \textit{tōhû} \text{ v}^{\text{ā}}\textit{bōhû} \text{)}$, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”). In order for the qal perfect verb $\text{הָיָה} \text{ (} \textit{hāy}^{\text{e}}\textit{tā}^{\text{h}} \text{)}$, “was”) in Genesis 1:2 to have the nuance “had become,” “one would normally expect a *lamed* preposition prefixed to both the *tōhû* and *bōhû* which is not present here. Too the past perfect use of the verb [“had become”] normally has an antecedent text to provide a basis for the past perfect. This is also not present here.”⁷⁶² This combination of the “to be” verb and the *lamed* is in Genesis 2:7: “man became a living being/soul.” There is no *lamed* prefix in Genesis 1:2.

Moreover, Genesis 1:2 begins with a *vav/waw* disjunctive prefixing “three circumstantial clauses, all describing the conditions or circumstances existing *at the time* of the principle action indicated in verse 1.”⁷⁶³ At the time when the creation of the heavens and earth was being completed, three conditions applied: (1) earth was $\text{וַיְהִי} \text{ (} \textit{tōhû} \text{)}$

⁷⁵⁸ Pember, *Ages*, 32.

⁷⁵⁹ Pember, *Ages*, 32.

⁷⁶⁰ Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 483.

⁷⁶¹ Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 129.

⁷⁶² David M. Fonts, “Genesis 1-11,” *The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study*, Eugene H. Merrill, ed. (Colorado Springs: Victor, 2003), 40.

⁷⁶³ Merrill Unger, “Rethinking the Genesis Account of Creation” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 115:457 (Jan. 1958), 28.

$v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\bar{u}$, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”), (2) its worldwide sea was covered with darkness, and (3) the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the deep. A *vav/waw* disjunctive as in Genesis 1:2 is a parenthetical statement that describes circumstances rather than being an action. In contrast, the translation “became” or “had become” would have been used with the *vav/waw* consecutive, describing the next action in a sequence. The *vav/waw* consecutive in Genesis 19:26 does exactly that—it describes two successive actions: “And she looked,” “and she became.” “Became” is an action. So in 19:26 the *vav/waw* consecutive prefixed qal *imperfect* is correctly translated “became.” The two verses are not grammatically analogous, so Pember’s conclusion that we may therefore translate the “to be” verb in Genesis 1:2 as “became” is completely false.

Pember and Custance both say that according to Isaiah 45:18, “God did not create the earth a *tohu*.”⁷⁶⁴ If God did not create earth desolate, then earth had to have “became” *tōhū*.

However, Isaiah 45:18 may be translated as in the NIV, “He did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited,” which indicates future intent and solves the problem.

(2b and 2d) *Lucifer ruled the ancient “preadamite” earth in the gap between 1:1 and 1:2. Earth was judged because of the sin of Lucifer and the “preadamites.”*

Pember claims that God’s judgment on evil spirits, “gods,” and evil human rulers (Psalm 82) was carried out between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.

However, Psalm 82 actually indicates that the psalmist was still calling for God to rise up in judgment on these three—the evil spirits, “gods,” and evil rulers. The judgment had *not yet happened*, because the Psalmist was still calling on God to act. Genesis 3:15 predicts judgment of the serpent, but the judgment on the “prince of this world” was future to the psalmist, coming at the work of Messiah. John 16:11 states, “In regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned [κέκρίται, perfect passive]” (NIV). Now Lucifer, the prince of this world, is under judgment, but God has not yet carried out the sentence. That sentence will be carried out on Lucifer in the future as described in Revelation 20. So Pember is incorrect that God judged Lucifer between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2

Pember then claims that Ezekiel 28:11–19 refers to a “preadamite Eden” between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 during which there was a “preadamite destruction.”⁷⁶⁵ So the earth “became” תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ ($t\bar{o}h\bar{u} v^{\bar{a}}b\bar{o}h\bar{u}$, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”).

⁷⁶⁴ Pember, *Ages*, 32.

However, Pember's interpretation is wrong, because Eden is not mentioned in Genesis 1:1–2. Eden was on the land, so Eden did not appear until God made the dry land appear in Genesis 1:9.

Finally, there is no indication in the text of Genesis 1:1–2 or anywhere else in the Bible of Lucifer's descent and fall or of a judgment between 1:1 and 1:2. Text evidence affirms when Lucifer descended and sinned, but that was definitely *not* at Genesis 1:1–2.

(2e) Tōhû v^ābōhû in *Isaiah 34:11* and *Jeremiah 4:23* addressed judgment, so tōhû v^ābōhû in *Genesis 1:2* must have addressed God's judgment too. Gap theory advocates claim that since *Isaiah 34:11* and *Jeremiah 4:23* were judgment passages, then *Genesis 1:2* must have been a judgment too. So Satan's sin and God's judgment produced chaos.

However, in response, תֹהוּ וּבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) in *Isaiah 34:11* and *Jeremiah 4:23* are “verbal allusions” to *Genesis 1:2*. God allowed Edom and Judah respectively to be conquered and so rendered tōhû v^ābōhû, or uninhabitable and uninhabited. The cause was conquest of Edom and Judah by foreign armies as the instrument of God's judgment. But an allusion works in only one direction. *Genesis 1:2* is an illustration of the conquered condition of Edom and Judah. It is not legitimate to import the later context in *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah* of armed conquest as God's means of judgment back into the original meaning of *Genesis 1:2* (although it is legitimate to see the meaning of all three as similar, that is, uninhabitable and uninhabited or empty of life). So first, תֹהוּ וּבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) does not mean chaos. Second, the terms do not imply judgment by which earth “became” or was changed into a תֹהוּ וּבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) condition. Instead, planet earth was simply desolate or uninhabitable and empty of life.

(2f) *Fossils came from “preadamite” life between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2; therefore that ancient life was unrelated to today's life, which was created new during the six days. This explains the fossil record.*

According to all gap theorists, the ancient fossils came from the first creation of life, which died and remained in the ancient rock formations. Culance goes to great lengths to claim that at least the first stage of the gap theory, the creation of the heavens and the earth before the six days, predates modern geology.

⁷⁶⁵ Pember, *Ages*, 61.

However, a connection seems likely between this idea in the gap theory and the new knowledge about ancient fossils in the newly emerging science of geology. The “fathers” of modern geology and “fathers” of the full modern gap theory were both in England and Scotland during the same time and were closely interconnected. James Hutton of Scotland presented his *Theory of the Earth* to the Royal Society in 1785 and published it in 1788. William Smith published the first national geological map of England in 1815. Charles Lyell of Scotland published *Principles of Geology* in three volumes from 1830 to 1833.⁷⁶⁶ The modern gap theory arose in England and Scotland during that time. Thomas Chalmers, a brilliant mathematician and “inner-city” reforming minister of the Church of Scotland and later moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, further advanced the gap theory with the publication in 1814 of *Examination of Cuvier’s Theory of the Earth*.⁷⁶⁷ He proposed, first, an initial creation; second, a long period of time during which earth was “a fair residence of life” ending in a desolation with even the luminaries obscured from earth; and, third, the six days’ work by God.⁷⁶⁸ William Buckland, an English geologist and paleontologist, became president of the Geological Society of London. He was an early proponent of old earth creationism (OEC) along with flood geology, a geological view known then as Neptunism. In 1820 he published *Vindiciae Geologiae; or the Connexion of Geology with Religion explained* as his vindication of geology as a science and his reconciliation of the known geological evidence with the Bible’s account of the creation and flood. He reconciled the Bible accounts with geology by the ruin-reconstruction theory. In a first stage, Genesis 1:1 involved a beginning period of time during which God created the heavens and the earth.

⁷⁶⁶ An exception was Nicolas Steno, or Niels Stensen in his native Danish. He published the first principles of geology in *De solido* in 1669, but rather than pursue his geology he converted to Catholicism and became a priest. His law of superposition that the lower geological stratum is older is, “at the time when any given stratum was being formed, all the matter resting upon it was fluid, and, therefore, at the time when the lower stratum was being formed, none of the upper strata existed.” His principle of original horizontality is “Strata either perpendicular to the horizon or inclined to the horizon were at one time parallel to the horizon.” His principle of lateral continuity is, “Material forming any stratum were continuous over the surface of the Earth unless some other solid bodies stood in the way.” And his principle of cross-cutting discontinuities is “If a body or discontinuity cuts across a stratum, it must have formed after that stratum.” Wikipedia, “Nicolas Steno” and Alan Cutler, *The Seashell on the Mountaintop: A Story of Science, Sainthood, and the Humble Genius Who Discovered a New History of the Earth* (New York: Dutton, 2003).

⁷⁶⁷ “Chalmers, Thomas,” *Encyclopædia Britannica, Eleventh Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), public domain on-line without page numbers; “Chalmers, Thomas,” *Encyclopædia Britannica 2007 Deluxe Edition* (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2007), computer edition without page numbers; “Thomas Chalmers, Wikipedia; Culance, *Void*, 26.

⁷⁶⁸ Thomas Chalmers, *Works*, Vol. 1, 228, and Vol. XII, 369, in Bernard Ram, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954, 196, footnote 26: in Culance, *Void*, 26.

“The first verse of Genesis seems explicitly to assert the creation of the Universe, the heavens, including the sidereal systems and the earth, more especially our own planet, as the subsequent scene of the operations of the six days about to be described.”⁷⁶⁹ In a second stage, he claimed that during “an undefined period of time . . . during which a long series of operations may have been going on: which, as they are wholly unconnected with the history of the human race, are passed over in silence by the sacred historian.” “Millions and millions of years may have occupied the indefinite interval, between the beginning in which God created the heavens and the earth and the . . . commencement of the first day of the Mosaic narrative.” Buckland was definitely an old earth creationist (OEC). In this time period, God periodically created a long series of life kinds. But then came disaster. “We have in verse 2 . . . *chaos* . . . which may be geologically considered as designating the wreck and ruins of a former world.”⁷⁷⁰ In that disaster, all life became extinct and was buried by ancient flood catastrophism, resulting in the world’s fossils. Buckland himself discovered and in 1824 published the first full account of an extinct fossil reptile that we would call a dinosaur, which he named *Megalosaurus*. In a third stage, God re-created life in the six days. Both Chalmers in 1833 and Buckland in 1836 contributed to the *Bridgewater Papers*, suggesting that God used means according to natural law in His works. The year 1833 was the same year Charles Lyell of Scotland published his last volume of *Principles of Geology*. With geologists Adam Sedgwick and Charles Lyell, William Buckland wrote a report resulting in the founding of the Geological Survey of Great Britain.⁷⁷¹ We may at least suggest that the second stage of ancient catastrophism in the gap theory may have been influenced more by the Scottish-English milieu of emerging geology and nascent paleontology than by the Bible.

This claim of two creations of life seems highly unlikely, since the discovery of many “living fossils”—mountain beaver, platypus, crocodiles, coelacanth, lungfish, sharks, wasps, crinoids, horseshoe crabs, ginkgo trees, horsetails, dawn redwoods, and stromatolites. All these are both living and in the fossil record. One could claim that God created new animals similar to the old fossilized ones, but that does seem to beg the question.

⁷⁶⁹ William Buckland, *Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology*, Vol. 1, Chapter 2, 1836; Volume VI in *The Bridgewater Treatises*; in Culance, *Void*, 27.

⁷⁷⁰ Buckland, *Geology and...Natural Theology*; in Culance, *Void*, 27

⁷⁷¹ “Buckland, William,” *Encyclopædia Britannica, Eleventh Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), public domain on-line without page numbers; “Buckland, William,” *Encyclopædia Britannica 2007 Deluxe Edition* (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2007); “William Buckland,” Wikipedia.

PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF THE GAP THEORY

(2c) *Lucifer's sin began death for animals; Adam's sin began death for Adam's race.* The Bible speaks of “him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14).

If we leave out all the other problematic stage-two claims of the gap theory, this claim, that animal death originated with Lucifer, deserves consideration. I list this claim under “partially supported” because the gap theory’s antecedent claim of vast animal life and death between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 is wrong. The questions we must ask are, When does the Bible indicate that Lucifer fell? Was Lucifer’s sin the cause of animal death? When did that animal death start? And how does Genesis 1:31, “And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good” fit with animal death? Finally, why is animal death not mentioned in the curse from Adam’s sin in Genesis 3?

(3) *In stage three God restored planet earth and re-created all new life kinds in six normal days, but He left the ancient fossil record that resulted from His judgment. Gap theory advocates claim that the days were “six days of restoration.”*⁷⁷²

We may agree that the six days were normal days but not that they were days of “restoration.”

LARGELY SUBSTANTIATED HERMENEUTICS, PRESUPPOSITIONS, AND CLAIMS OF THE GAP THEORY

(Hermeneutical Practice 1) *Scriptural exegesis and science should remain largely independent, but both, when correctly interpreted, will ultimately agree.*

This claim by Arthur Custance advocating independence of both science research and Scriptural exegesis is key to furthering the unity of our understanding of what God did. After the research in each is done, then they may be compared. That way neither prejudices the results of the other. Ultimately God’s Word and God work, because they are from the same truthful God, will agree.

(1) *During stage one, in the beginning God created the orderly heavens and earth—before the six days, not in the six days.*

⁷⁷² Pember, *Ages*, 63.

Pember rightly claims, “We are told that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; but the Scriptures never affirm that He did this in the six days.”⁷⁷³ Gap theory advocates correctly recognize that God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning before the six days, just as a plain reading of Genesis 1:1-3 states.

(1a) “*Bārā*” creation was different from six-day primarily “*āsâh*” fashioning work, so the young earth creation theory’s claim that the terms are often “used interchangeably”⁷⁷⁴ is wrong.

The אֱבָרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) creation in Genesis 1:1 was the *ex nihilo* work when the universe “was originally created by the power of the Almighty.”⁷⁷⁵ “*Asah* is generally used in connection with them [the work of the six days].” There is a difference between the creation of the heavens and earth out of nothing, creation of soulish animal life, and creation of the physical-spiritual man; and the אָסָה (*āsâh*, “do, make”) forming works of God, such as causing trees to “make” fruit, during the six days. So the young earth creationists’ claim that the two terms are often interchangeable is fundamentally wrong.

(1b) *God created the orderly heavens and earth, so the young earth creation (YEC) claim that God created merely their raw materials in 1:1 is wrong.*

“God, then, in the beginning created the heaven and the earth, not merely the materials out of which they were afterwards formed.” The YECs are wrong in their claim that only the raw materials of the universe, which they call “earth,” were created in Genesis 1:1 and that the heavens were *created* on the fourth day from those raw materials.

(1c) *Genesis 1:1 was the first event, before the six days, so the young earth creation (YEC) claim that 1:1 took place in the six days about 6,000 years ago is wrong.*

John Harris, in *The Pre-Adamite Earth* in 1847, explained that Genesis 1:1–2 occurred prior to rather than in the six days, because “the creation of the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth days begins with the formula, ‘And God said.’ It is only natural, therefore, to conclude that the creation of the first day begins with the third verse where the said formula first occurs, ‘And God said, “let there be light.”’ He continues, “But if so, it follows that the act described in the first verse, and the state of the earth spoken of in the second verse, must

⁷⁷³ Pember, *Ages*, 29.

⁷⁷⁴ Ham, *Answers*, 170.

⁷⁷⁵ William Buckland, *Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology*, Vol. 1, Chapter 2, 1836; Volume VI in *The Bridgewater Treatises*; in Custance, *Void*, 27.

both have belonged to a period anterior to the first day.”⁷⁷⁶ Regarding the initial act of creation of the heavens and earth before the six days, the gap theory, not the young earth creation theory, is correct. The gap theory is right in their first and third steps of creation, but wrong on their middle “gap” step.

(1d) *Time passed before day one began in Genesis 1:3.*

Custance quotes Thomas Aquinas who stated, “It seems better to maintain that creation was prior to any day.”⁷⁷⁷ Custance points out that even before the gap theory, St. Thomas “would not have agreed with Ussher that Creation occurred 4000 B.C. They might very probably have assented to his chronology as applied to the creation of *Adam* but they would have set the creation of the Universe (the heavens and the earth) further back in time by some unstated amount.”⁷⁷⁸ Different gap theory advocates differ on when this time passed. Some opinions are grammatically incorrect, but one has grammatical backing. We will discuss it later.

(1e) *Genesis 1:2 describes the tōhû v^abōhû condition of “the earth” before the work of the six days, so the young earth creation (YEC) claim of a chaotic universe is wrong.*

Genesis 1:2 changes the subject from “the heavens and earth” to the condition of “the earth,” so the six days “did not affect the sidereal heaven, but only the earth and its immediate surroundings.” The young earth creation theory is wrong in its claim that Genesis 1:2 says the entire universe was וַיְהִי תְהוֹמָה וַיְהִי עֲרִבּוֹתַיִם (*tōhû v^abōhû*). Genesis 1:2 explicitly says, “And the earth was *tōhû v^abōhû*.”

(1g) *Genesis 1:2 shows that 1:1 is not a summary, so the summary or title theory is wrong.*

Pember explains, “For if it [1:1] were a mere summary, the second verse would be the actual commencement of the history and certainly would not begin with a copulative”—“And the earth was,”—consisting of the *vav/waw* prefixed noun and “to be” verb regarding the condition of the earth some time after it had been created in 1:1.

(3a) *The six days were normal day-night cycle days, so the long day or day-age claim is wrong.*

⁷⁷⁶ John Harris, *The Pre-Adamite Earth* (London: Ward & Co., ca. 1849, republished G. S. Blanchard, 1860), 354; in Custance, *Void*, 27.

⁷⁷⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Sententiarum, Book II*, Distinction xiii, Article 3, “Ad Terium;” in Custance, *Void*, 22.

⁷⁷⁸ Custance, *Void*, 22.

Pember explains, “But whenever a numeral is connected with it [יָוֹם, *yôm*] the meaning is at once restricted thereby, and it can only be used in its literal acceptance of the time which the earth takes to make one revolution upon its axis.”⁷⁷⁹ The claim for long geological era “days” in the day-ages theory is wrong.

(3b) *On day one, God commanded, “Light be.”*

“The command went forth ‘Light be.’” “God called the light day and the darkness night.”⁷⁸⁰ This light was diffuse sunlight, now functioning through the cloud onto the rotating earth.

(3c) *On a second day, God commanded the atmosphere.*

On the second day, at God’s command “the firmament, or atmosphere which we breathe, was formed,” “inserted” between the water above and the ocean water upon the earth.⁷⁸¹

(3d) *On a third day, God gathered the sea, and dry land appeared; then He caused the land to sprout vegetation.*

The rise of land is described in Psalm 104:6–9: “The mountains rose, the valleys sank.”⁷⁸² This was not the “creation” of dry land *ex nihilo*, but its rise from the ocean.

(3e) *On a fourth day, God established earth’s relations with the heavenly bodies so they could serve their purposes to earth.*

“It remained only to establish its [earth’s] relations with the heavenly bodies.” God “apparently, so altered or modified the firmament” to bring about this relation of the heavenly bodies to the earth. “God is not said to have created these light-holders on the Fourth Day. . . . They were created, as we have seen, in the beginning.”⁷⁸³

(3f) *On a fifth day, God caused the waters to swarm with living creatures and flyers to inhabit the air.*

“Let the waters swarm with swarms, with living creatures.” “And let fowl fly above the earth in the face of the firmament of heaven.”⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁷⁹ Pember, *Ages*, 66.

⁷⁸⁰ Pember, *Ages*, 65.

⁷⁸¹ Pember, *Ages*, 66.

⁷⁸² Pember, *Ages*, 67.

⁷⁸³ Pember, *Ages*, 68.

⁷⁸⁴ Pember, *Ages*, 69.

(3g) *On the sixth day, God caused the land to produce three classes of life and created man.*

God caused the land to produce “three classes of living creatures—cattle or domesticated animals, creeping things, . . . and beasts of the field or wild roaming animals.” Then God made man “in His image and after His likeness.”⁷⁸⁵

(3h) *God instituted rest on the seventh day.*

“Then follows the institution of the Sabbath on the Seventh Day.”

(3i) *The “generations” statement in Genesis 2:4 ends this first narrative.*

“This wondrous history closes with a summary of the subject and an introduction to the next part in these words: ‘These are the generations of the heavens and the earth.’ ”

(3j) *Genesis 1 and 2 are not contradictory.*

“While chapter one gives a continuous history of the week,” in chapter two “reference is made to other works of the Six Days only when . . . connected with the main subject, and without any regard to the order in which they were performed.”

SUMMARY OF THE GAP THEORY

Gap creationists correctly recognize that Genesis 1:1 declares that God created the heavens (including the sun, moon, and stars) and the earth *ex nihilo* in the beginning as stage one before the six days. But from the nascent science of geology, they see the earth and its fossils as old. So they propose that a “gap” of time occurred between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 as stage two, during which God created a first series of life forms including “pre-adamite” humans. But Lucifer, along with the “pre-adamites,” fell. Then God judged the earth, and it became ruined. So gap creationists claim that Genesis 1:2 should be translated, “Now the earth became waste and ruin.” Finally, in stage three, God reconstituted the earth for life and re-created new life forms in the six normal days. This is an old earth creation (OEC) theory.

10. HISTORICAL LAND CREATIONISM (HLC)

John Sailhamer was my first Hebrew teacher, and we continue to greet one another at yearly Evangelical Theological Society meetings. He is a devout Christian and a man whom I respect, a man who is almost always smiling. He has many extraordinarily helpful insights into creation. I have had the amazing experience of studying under a gap theory advocate,

⁷⁸⁵ Pember, *Ages*, 71.

under John Sailhamer, with Henry Morris in a lecture series, and with Hugh Ross in a lectures series. Each has contributed greatly to my understanding of creation, but each in turn has, I believe, erred at some critical point.

John Sailhamer calls his theory “historical creationism,” but his theory is really about “the land.” I suggest a better title is “historical land creationism.” He is the author of “Genesis” in *the Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, and *Genesis Unbound*, related to creation, as well as a half dozen other significant books.⁷⁸⁶

PREUNDERSTANDINGS OF HISTORICAL LAND CREATIONISM

(00) *Have no unexamined assumptions.* John Sailhamer, early in his preface, makes the statement, “We often read the first two chapters of Genesis with a set of unexamined assumptions.” He believes that we should examine our assumptions about the Bible from the Bible text. An unexamined example is the unfortunate assumption so many people have that “originally the world was a formless mass.”⁷⁸⁷ He compares this assumption to the Bible text and demonstrate that it is not the meaning of the text. I agree with him.

(0) *Recognize that we can be wrong.* “If I am mistaken, however, then I pray that my well-intentioned views would do no great harm and that they would slip into a quickly forgotten past.” He believes in a spirit of “congenial discovery.”⁷⁸⁸ I, too, hope and pray that I may follow in the footsteps of this great Christian creationist in “congenial discovery,” and may I recognize that I, too, may err as I seek to understand what God says in Scripture that He did in the creation. What error I may see in John Sailhamer’s theory, may I point out congenially.

HERMENEUTICS OF HISTORICAL LAND CREATIONISM

(Practice 1) *Start with the Bible text; after exegesis, relate the meaning to science.* “We must first understand the biblical text and then seek to relate its meaning to the findings of modern science, if possible.”⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁶ John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); “Genesis” in *the Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990); *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 1996).

⁷⁸⁷ John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 1996), 11.

⁷⁸⁸ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 17.

⁷⁸⁹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 44.

(Practice 2) *View the text from the perspective of the writer and original readers.* “It was only natural to view the Biblical text with the narrow limits of what was known about the world.” This makes sense when seeking to understand an author. But Sailhamer limits the “earth” known by the author to the “promised land.”⁷⁹⁰ Thus, Sailhamer claims Genesis 1:2—2:4a is about Eden, which will become the “promised land.”

CLAIMS OF HISTORICAL LAND CREATIONISM

John Sailhamer’s view of creation is “two great acts of God.” The first act, in Genesis 1:1, was the original creation of the universe and all life on earth. The second act, beginning in Genesis 1:2, was the six days preparing the Land—Eden, which would become the future Promised Land—for Adam and Eve.

(1) *In God’s first creation act in Genesis 1:1, He created the universe—including the earth, sun, moon, and stars—as well as all extinct and living plants and animals.* “In the first act, God created the universe we see around us today, consisting of the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, and all the plants and animals that now inhabit (or formerly inhabited) the earth. The biblical record of that act of creation is recounted in Genesis 1:1—‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.’”⁷⁹¹

(1a) *Genesis is a series of narratives of real events.* Genesis “is about events.” “An event is something that happened in time and space.”⁷⁹² The genre is “historical narrative.” “We may propose a preliminary definition of historical narrative as a proselike literature which seeks to render a *realistic* picture of the world.”⁷⁹³ “The author [of Genesis 1—2] clearly intends us to read his account of creation as literal history, . . . a historical account of creation.”⁷⁹⁴ “Some conservative scholars” propose that “Moses used a collection of clay tablets which had preserved the accounts of creation, the flood, and the lives of the patriarchs.”⁷⁹⁵ Thus Moses would have written the Pentateuch in much the same way as Luke says he wrote his gospel (cf. Lk. 1:1-4.)⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹⁰ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 45.

⁷⁹¹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 14.

⁷⁹² John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 15.

⁷⁹³ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 12-13.

⁷⁹⁴ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 45.

⁷⁹⁵ R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1969, 547-553), footnote in Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 23.

⁷⁹⁶ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 23.

May I note that Sailhamer erred in this statement, because Wiseman and Harrison claim Genesis, not the whole Pentateuch, came from source tablets. “The Pentateuch depicts accurately the age and historical period of the patriarchs and the Exodus, which is a period about which our knowledge has considerably increased in modern times from archaeological discoveries. Many of the historical details and customs in the lives of the patriarchs are now known to us from contemporary documents. In the case of the patriarchs, Moses or someone later than him would not have known such details.” Sailhamer concludes, “The account of those events and persons exhibits all the traits of historical trustworthiness.”⁷⁹⁷ The evidence supports the conclusion that the events of Genesis were real events.

(1b) *Genesis is divided into narrative units, the creation unit being 1:1—2:4a.* After a discussion of the elements of an historical narrative unit, Sailhamer says, “Genesis 1:1-2:4a is clearly recognizable as a unit of historical narrative.”

(1c) *Genesis 1:1—2:4a introduces the Sinai covenant by identifying Who God is—the Creator—and what He has promised—the Land.* In preparation for the Sinai covenant, Israel must understand that Yahweh is not a local or national “god.” “The purpose of 1:1 is not to identify this God in a general way but to identify him as the Creator of the universe.”⁷⁹⁸ “God alone is eternal and . . . all else owes its origin and existence to him.”⁷⁹⁹

God is the Creator of the heavens, the land of earth, and all people. As the Creator of the heavens and the earth, He has the right to give the Promised Land in a covenant to His Chosen People. As the Creator of all people, His blessings through Israel in the Land should extend to all peoples. “We may conclude . . . with a summary of Genesis 1:1-2:4a. The author intends his Creation account to relate to his readers that God, the Creator of the universe, has prepared the land as a home for his special creature, the human being, and he has a plan of blessing for all his creatures.”⁸⁰⁰ The Sinai covenant with God’s Law, its demand for righteousness, and sacrifice system for sin will be carried out in the Land. This holy Law to be enacted among God’s people in the Promised Land is a call to return to the original purpose of the Creation—that humans may once again fellowship with God as in Eden. Only if this point is understood does Sailhamer’s focus on Eden, which becomes the

⁷⁹⁷ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 23-24.

⁷⁹⁸ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 82.

⁷⁹⁹ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 83.

⁸⁰⁰ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 29.

Promised Land, make sense. Even if Sailhamer is incorrect when the Genesis 1—2 text begins to focus on Eden, as I believe he is, this is a wonderful insight that the Pentateuch is a call to return to a relationship with God as in Eden.

(1d) *Genesis 1:1 is not a mere chapter title but was the actual ex nihilo creation.* “What many people fail to realize is that such an understanding of Genesis 1:1 [that it might be regarded as merely a title to the rest of the chapter] rules out a fundamental notion in the traditional view—the idea that God created the world ‘out of nothing.’ ” With the title view of Genesis 1:1, “God’s acts begin in Genesis 1:2. Since the earth was already ‘formless and void’ (vs. 2), that means the earth already existed when God began to act. But if that is so, when did God create the earth?”⁸⁰¹ The title theory almost requires the problematic precreation chaos theory—that chaos existed along with God before Genesis 1:1. Grammatically, “The first verse, a verbal clause, should be taken as an independent statement rather than a summary of the rest of chapter 1. Thus 1:1 describes God’s first work of creation *ex nihilo*, and the rest of the chapter describes God’s further activity.”⁸⁰²

Later Sailhamer gives three reasons why Genesis 1:1 is not a title. “1. *In the original, the first verse is a complete sentence that makes a statement, but titles are not formed that way in Hebrew*” (italics his). “In Hebrew, titles consist of simple phrases” such as the first phrase in Genesis 5:1a: literally, “This book of generational-accounts of Adam” (my translation). The phrase has no verb. The same is true for 2:5a: “These the generational-accounts of the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1 is “so different because 2:4a intends to serve as a title, while 1:1 does not.”⁸⁰³ “2. *The conjunction ‘and’ at the beginning of the second verse makes it highly unlikely that 1:1 is a title*” (italics his). “Hebrew grammar uses this conjunction carefully. If verse 1 were a title, the section immediately following it would surely not begin with the conjunction ‘and.’ ”⁸⁰⁴ “3. *Genesis 1 has a summary title at its conclusion, making it unlikely it would have another at its beginning*” (italics his).

(1e) “*The beginning*” was a “*period of time*”⁸⁰⁵ with a “*starting point,*” length unspecified. “The Hebrew word *reshit*, which is the term for ‘beginning’ used in this chapter, has a very specific sense in Scripture. In the Bible the term always refers to an extended, yet

⁸⁰¹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 23.

⁸⁰² Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 82, footnote 2.

⁸⁰³ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 102-103.

⁸⁰⁴ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 103.

⁸⁰⁵ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 14.

indeterminate duration of time—not a specific moment. It is a block of time which precedes an extended a series of time periods.” “The term [תִּיבְרֵשִׁתׁ, *b^erēshît*, “in the beginning”] does not refer to a point in time but to a *period* or *duration* of time which falls before a series of events.” It has a “starting point” and a “specific duration.”⁸⁰⁶

“In Job 8:7 the word *reshit* refers to the early part of Job’s life, before his misfortunes overtook him.” “It was an unspecified, but lengthy, period in Job’s life.” “Within the Book of Genesis itself, the author uses the term *reshit* to refer to the early part of Nimrod’s kingdom (Genesis 10:10).” The NIV translates תִּיבְרֵשִׁתׁ (*rē’shît*; first, beginning, best, chief, firstfruits) in that verse as, “The first centers [*reshit*] of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Adda, and Calneh.” “According to Jeremiah 28:1, for example, the ‘beginning’ [*reshit*] of King Zedekiah’s reign included events which happened four years after he had assumed the throne.”⁸⁰⁷

“Since the Hebrew word “*beginning*” refers to an indefinite period of time, we cannot say for certain when God created the world or how long He took to create it.”⁸⁰⁸ “The term *beginning* in Biblical Hebrew marks a starting point of a specific duration, as in ‘the beginning of the year’ (Deut. 11:12). In opening the account of Creation with the phrase ‘in the beginning,’ the author has marked Creation as the starting point of a period of time.”⁸⁰⁹ “God created the universe during an indeterminate period of time” followed by “a single, seven day week, which itself was followed by a vast history of humanity leading ultimately to Abraham and the people of Israel.”⁸¹⁰ “Other Hebrew words were available to the author.” “The author could have used a Hebrew word for ‘beginning similar to the English word ‘start’ or ‘initial point’ (for example, *rishonah* or *techillah*). Had he used one of those words, we would have to translate Genesis 1:1 something like this: ‘The first thing God did was to create the universe.’ Using such a term would have *required* that the universe be created in the first moment of time.” It is only the English word “beginning,” not the Hebrew word תִּיבְרֵשִׁתׁ (*b^erēshît*, “in the beginning,” with the prefixed particle preposition added to תִּיבְרֵשִׁתׁ *rēshît*, “first, beginning”) that allows the erroneous interpretation that God created

⁸⁰⁶ Sailhamer, “Genesis,” 20. Apparently he means the actual duration is specific, even if the length is indeterminate to the reader of the text. The text does not tell the reader how long the period of time was.

⁸⁰⁷ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 38-39.

⁸⁰⁸ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 14.

⁸⁰⁹ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 84.

⁸¹⁰ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 40.

the whole universe in an instant, including trees “with growth rings showing years of growth” and homing pigeons “returning to homes they had, in fact, never been to.”⁸¹¹

Another reason why the “beginning” indicates a period of time is that the Bible pairs the “beginning” “with its antonym ‘end.’”⁸¹² The “end” refers to the “end times,” unquestionably a period of time at least including the Tribulation and Millennium. The end will be a reversal of the beginning. The beginning was from good to evil; the end will be from evil to good. Since the “end” will be a period of time, so was the “beginning.”

How long was “the beginning?” “There is no way to limit the duration of the word ‘beginning’ (Hebrew, *reshit*). It could refer to billions of years, to a few thousand years, or to a period as brief as a few months or days. The length of time of this ‘beginning’ is precisely what is left unspecified by the term. The whole point of using *reshit* to convey the concept of ‘beginning’ (when other terms were readily available) is to leave the duration of time unspecified.”⁸¹³ John Sailhamer, like me, believes in a beginning time period unspecified in length by the Bible, so an undated earth creation (UEC).

(1f) *In Genesis 1:1 God created the entire universe including earth.* “A merism combines two words to express a single idea . . . ‘totality’ by combining two contrasts or two extremes.” “Heavens and earth” in “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.’” “Heavens and earth” in Genesis 1:1 is a merism that expresses the creation by God of everything else including “the sun, the moon, and the stars.”⁸¹⁴ So far, many of us could agree.

(1g) *The young earth creation theory improperly attempts to date the beginning of the universe by Adam’s genealogy.* Is it a legitimate, proper method to date the heavens and earth by Adam’s genealogy? “Such an approach to dating the time of creation [by Adam’s genealogy to about 6,000 years ago] is based on two faulty assumptions: 1. It assumes that the biblical genealogies are to be understood as strict chronologies.” The conservative B. B. Warfield argued that gaps existed in the genealogies, because the New Testament includes one person missing in the Old Testament version of the same genealogy, and “father” could

⁸¹¹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 41.

⁸¹² Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 82.

⁸¹³ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 28-29.

⁸¹⁴ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 56.

mean ancestor. So even Adam’s date could be somewhat older than Bishop Usher’s proposed date of 4004 B.C.

“2. It assumes that the ‘beginning’ of creation (Genesis 1:1) occurred in the first day of the week recounted in that chapter.” But the beginning took place *before* light began daylight of day one ending in evening, night, and morning. Moreover, the text does not say “first day,” meaning no time passed before the first light of that day. The text actually says, $\text{י, וַיֵּבֶרֶת} \text{ יוֹם} \text{ אֶחָד}$ (*yôm ehād*, “day one”).⁸¹⁵ Time could have passed before day one of the six days. Sailhamer says “one day,” which I find is open to problematic interpretations. But his point of time allowed before “day one” (the actual order of the Hebrew text) is well taken from the Hebrew text.

(1h) *In the Genesis 1:1 era, God created sea and land and all plants and animals.* In addition to creating “the heavens and the earth” in 1:1, God created “the seas, the dry land, and the plants and animals that inhabit them.”⁸¹⁶ “The many biological eras would also fit within ‘the beginning’ of Genesis 1:1, including the long ages during which the dinosaurs roamed the earth. By the time humans beings were created on the sixth day of the week, the dinosaurs already could have flourished and become extinct—all during the ‘beginning’ recorded in Genesis 1:1.”⁸¹⁷ “The Bible allows for the creation of dinosaurs and all other forms of early plant and animal life ‘in the beginning,’ since the Hebrew word for ‘beginning’ in Genesis 1:1 could encompass eons during which God’s work of creation was carried out.”⁸¹⁸

(1i) *All earth’s history up to the six days’ work on Eden took place in Genesis 1:1.* “Within that ‘beginning’ would fit the countless geological ages, ice ages, and the many climatic changes on our planet.”⁸¹⁹

(1j) *Tōhû v^ābōhû in Genesis 1:2 means uninhabitable wilderness, not chaos.* The Greek Septuagint unhelpfully translated $\text{וַיְהִי} \text{ חֹשֶׁךְ} \text{ וַיְהִי} \text{ עֲרִב}$ (*tōhû v^ābōhû*) as “unseen” and “unformed.” “Were it not for the Greek notion of ‘primeval chaos,’ the phrase never would have been translated that way. The sense of the Hebrew phrase suggests something quite different, a sense some early translators identified quite clearly.” The meaning is

⁸¹⁵ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 31.

⁸¹⁶ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 56.

⁸¹⁷ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 29.

⁸¹⁸ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 33.

⁸¹⁹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 27-45.

“uninhabitable” and “wilderness” “that had not yet become inhabitable for human beings.”⁸²⁰ Jeremiah 4:23–26 uses the same terms with the sense of “deserted and uninhabited.”⁸²¹ Sailhamer says that Ibn Ezra (1092–1167) understood the phrase to mean that earth was “uninhabited because it was covered with water, not that the earth was formless chaos.”⁸²²

(1k) *The gap theory is wrong; there was no catastrophe and so no restoration.* This is the key difference between John Sailhamer’s historical land creationism and the gap theory: “There are no ‘gaps’ in the creation account of Genesis 1, nor is there a ‘re-creation’ or ‘restoration’ of an original creation.”⁸²³ The other difference is that Sailhamer claims the creation of land and life occurred in Genesis 1:1, not in the grammatically highly improbable supposed gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.

(2) *In God’s second creation act in Genesis 1:2—2:29, in six days God prepared the Land, Eden, which would become the future Promised Land.* “In the second period (Genesis 1:2-2:4a), God prepared the garden of Eden for man’s dwelling; that activity occurred in one week.”⁸²⁴ “The second act of God recounted in Genesis 1 and 2 deals with a much more limited scope and period of time. Beginning with Genesis 1:2, the biblical narrative recounts God’s preparation of a land for the man and the woman he was to create. The ‘land’ was the same land later promised to Abraham and his descendants.” “According to Genesis 1, God prepared that land within a period of a six-day work week.”⁸²⁵ In other words, John Sailhamer proposes that the six days involved working solely on the “Land” of Eden, not on the planet “earth.”

(2a) *The “earth” in Genesis 1:2—2:4a was the Land of Eden.* The English words “land” and “earth” come from the same Hebrew word אֶרֶץ (*‘āretz* from *‘eretz*). Sailhamer suggests that the global sense was used in Genesis 1:1, but the local land of Eden in 1:2. He claims, “Throughout Genesis 1, the term *eretz* is used to denote ‘the dry land,’ as opposed to a body of water, the seas (1:10).”⁸²⁶ “We have filled the word [*eretz* in Genesis 1:1–2] with a meaning it clearly did not suggest to its original readers.” “‘Earth’ ” conjures up images of a

⁸²⁰ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 63-64.

⁸²¹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 65.

⁸²² Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 196.

⁸²³ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 44.

⁸²⁴ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 29.

⁸²⁵ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 14.

⁸²⁶ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 49.

globe sitting on our desk or a blue disk in space as we might see it from the moon.”⁸²⁷ That is the wrong perspective. Sailhamer suggests “a change in meaning from the first to the second verse.”

Sailhamer claims that the Sinai Covenant with Israel to give Israel the Promised Land is a major theme of the Pentateuch. Therefore, אֶרֶץ (*'āretz* from *'eret*), starting in Genesis 1:2, was the Promised Land. He says, “This is the strongest argument for taking the setting of Genesis 1 and 2 as the promised land.”⁸²⁸

(2b) *The Land of Eden and the Promised Land are the same.* “The boundaries of that garden are the same as those of the promised land; thus the events of these chapters [Genesis 1—2] foreshadow the events of the remainder of the Pentateuch.”⁸²⁹ “Not only does the Hebrew term *eret* normally mean ‘land’ as opposed to ‘the earth,’ but it usually refers specifically to the land promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:18).”⁸³⁰

(2c) *In the six days, God prepared the already created Land of Eden for mankind.* “God did not *create* ‘the land’ in Genesis 1:2-2:4a; He had already created the land and the rest of the universe ‘in the beginning’ in Genesis 1:1. In the remainder of the chapter, God is at work *preparing* the land for human habitation.” “Moses thus wants us to see God as both Creator of the universe (Genesis 1:1) and Giver of ‘the land’ (Genesis 1:2-2:4a).” “Such a view of God is central to the theory [Sailhamer’s “the Land” theory] of the Pentateuch and its focus on the Sinai Covenant (Exodus 19:5).”⁸³¹

(2d) *The light on day one was diffuse sunlight.* “If the sun is meant to be included in the merism ‘sky and land’ in Genesis 1:1, then it is natural to assume that the sun was created already in the first verse. If that is so, then the ‘light’ of verse 3 was simply the light of the sun.” “The expression ‘there was light’ is one way the Bible refers to sunlight.”⁸³² “For example, see Genesis 44:3; Exodus 10:23; and Judges 19:26.”⁸³³ Exodus 10:23 says, “Israel had light.” The Hebrew, אָרָא אֶת־הָאֵשׁ (hāyâh ôr, “have/had light” qal perfect 3rd ms) is

⁸²⁷ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 37.

⁸²⁸ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 52.

⁸²⁹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 15.

⁸³⁰ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 50.

⁸³¹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 30.

⁸³² Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 56.

⁸³³ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 251, chapter four, footnote 3.

very similar to Genesis 1:3, אֵרָא יִהְיֶה (y^ehî ôr, “be light” qal imperfect jussive 3rd ms). Both indicated sunlight.

(2e) *In the second day’s work, God caused the clouds to rise from the sea. The young earth creation theory’s claim of interstellar water vapor as part of initial chaos is wrong. “Biblically, the ‘waters above the heavens’ are simply the clouds which provide rain.” The “expanse” is best understood by our English word “sky.”*⁸³⁴

The young earth creation theory’s claims that the waters above the expanse were a major part of the chaotic cosmological universe. young earth creationist Frank DeRemer says, “The luminaries were not made until Day 4, probably from the ‘waters above the expanse.’ ” He claims that the expanse was the space of the universe, the wider sense of רָקִיעַ (rāqîa’), so God formed the “waters above the expanse” on the second day as the matter throughout the chaos-universe. Then, on the fourth day, God transformed these “waters above the expanse” into the several hundred billion galaxies of the universe.⁸³⁵

Sailhamer responds, “The central question is how the author understands and uses the term *expanse*. Is it used from a cosmological perspective, that is, is it intended to describe a major component of the structured universe? Or does the term describe something immediate in the everyday experience of the author (e.g., the ‘clouds’ that hold the rain)?”⁸³⁶ The word רָקִיעַ (rāqîa’, “expanse”) was used in a local and extended sense. The extended sense included the sun, moon, and stars in the sky (Gen. 1:14, 15, 17). The local sense was “where the birds fly,” (1:20). The expanse in the second day (1:6–8) with the “water above” was also the local sense. The “water above” must be understood from the perspective of the author. The author could see birds in the sky and see the sun, moon, and stars in the sky. The author could also see clouds in the sky. All these were in the “everyday experience of the author.” But the author could *not* have seen pre-galactic water vapor. Pre-galactic water vapor would have made no sense to Adam, Moses, or Israel. The water in the sky above was clouds. In God’s second day’s work, the clouds rose from the sea surface, forming an expanse of open air between called sky.

(2f) *In the first act of the third day’s work, God made “pools” called “seas” in Eden. Sailhamer claims, “We should not think of the ‘oceans’ when we read that God named the*

⁸³⁴ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 117.

⁸³⁵ Frank DeRemer, “Young biosphere, old universe?” *Technical Journal of AiG* 19:2, 55.

⁸³⁶ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 89.

‘pools of water’ the ‘seas’ in Genesis 1:10. In Hebrew, any ‘pool’ of water—regardless of the size—is called a ‘sea.’⁸³⁷ “For example, the bronze basin made for temple worship in also called a ‘sea’ (see 1 Kings 7:23-25, 39, 44).”⁸³⁸

(2g) *Also on the third day God made only seed plants (with fruit for humans), so He made other green plants mentioned in Genesis 1:30 previously.* “According to the Hebrew text only ‘fruit trees’ were created on the third day, not ‘all kinds of trees’ as many English translations suggest. Those ‘fruit trees’ were for the man’s and woman’s nourishment (Genesis 1:29).” “At the conclusion of the chapter, other plants are mentioned [כָּל־צֶמַח יָחִיד וְצֶמַח עֵץ, “every green plant”] that also are for . . . food for animals (Genesis 1:30).” “Yet the creation of these plants is not mentioned anywhere in the first chapter; clearly they were not created on the third day.” “The account thus assumes that such plants already were present in God’s world.”

“This means that all those things [vast plant and animal life] were created as part of ‘the heavens and earth’ in Genesis 1:1,”⁸³⁹ so the plants on the third day were planted by God only in Eden for Adam and Eve.

(2h) *God created the sun, moon, and stars in Genesis 1:1, not on the fourth day.* “Though our English translations of Genesis often suggest that God created the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day, the Hebrew text does not demand, *or even allow for*, such an interpretation. The overall sense of Genesis 1 assumes that by the fourth day, the sun, moon, and stars are already in place”⁸⁴⁰ (emphasis his). “According to the Hebrew text, God said, ‘Let the lights in the expanse be for separating the day and night. . . .’ God’s command, in other words, *assumes that the light already exists* in the expanse”⁸⁴¹ (emphasis his). “If the difference between the syntax of verse 6 (the use of הָיָה alone) and verse 14 (הָיָה with an infinitive) is significant, then it suggests that the author does not understand his account of the fourth day as an account of the creation of the lights but, on the contrary, he assumes that the heavenly lights have already been created ‘in the beginning.’”⁸⁴²

⁸³⁷ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 126.

⁸³⁸ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 254.

⁸³⁹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 32.

⁸⁴⁰ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 30-32.

⁸⁴¹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 132.

⁸⁴² Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 93.

Young earth creationists claim that verse 16 involved the creation of the sun, moon, and stars. Sailhamer replies, “At the end of verse 15, the author states, ‘and it was so.’ This expression marks the end of the author’s report and the beginning of his comment in verse 16. Thus, verse 16 is not an account of the creation of the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day, but rather a remark directed to the reader to draw out the significance of that which had previously been recounted: ‘So God [and not anyone else] made the lights and put them into the sky.’ ”

John Sailhamer goes on to claim that all God did on the fourth day was speak: “God spoke.” “Thus, verse 16 is not an account of God’s actions on the fourth day. Rather it is a comment on what God said on that day.”

(2i) *On the fifth day, God introduced sea and air life (created in 1:1) into Eden.* God had created all the living creatures “in the beginning.” “What then is the focus of God’s work on the fifth day? It is simply to populate the promised land with the various creatures that were created ‘in the beginning.’ ”⁸⁴³

(2j) *On the sixth day, God introduced land animals into Eden and created humans.* “Human life did not originate until the sixth day of the work recorded in Genesis 1:2-4a. That means that human beings were *not* created ‘in the beginning’ with the rest of God’s creation.” “They came only after the indefinite period of time denoted by the term ‘beginning.’ ” “Genesis insists that all human beings as we know them today are descendents of Adam. That rules out the creation of human being ‘in the beginning’ in Genesis 1:1.”⁸⁴⁴

“The creation of humanity is set apart from the previous acts of creation.” First, God speaks personally: “Let us make.” Second, animals were made after their own kinds, but God makes humans in His likeness, in a limited sense in His kind, as spiritual as well as physical beings. Third, God specifically identifies both male and female humans. “Fourth, only human beings have been given dominion in God’s creation.”⁸⁴⁵

(2k) *Exodus 20:11 does not describe the initial creation of the universe but is a list of God’s work for six days.* Exodus 20:11 does not say that God *created* the heavens and earth in six days. “In Exodus 20:11, in the midst of His instructions on keeping the seventh day as a day of rest, God Himself alluded to this very account of preparing the ‘sky, the land, and

⁸⁴³ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 141.

⁸⁴⁴ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 32.

⁸⁴⁵ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 95

the sea.’⁸⁴⁶ “Exodus [20:11] does not use the merism ‘heavens and earth’ to describe God’s work” as if God created the whole heavens and earth, meaning everything, *in* the six days. “Rather, it gives us a list of God’s distinct works during the six days.” “This list refers to God’s work in Genesis 1:2-2:4, *not* to his creation of the universe in Genesis 1:1. Exodus 20:11 does not say God *created* ‘the heavens and earth’ in six days; it says God *made* three things in six days—the sky, the land, and the seas—and then filled them during that same period.”⁸⁴⁷ *Asah* does not mean “create *ex nihilo*,” but “put something in good order, to make it right.” An English example would be “‘to make’ a bed.”⁸⁴⁸ “To make” the bed is not to create the bed but to put its surface bedding in order. So Exodus 20:11 has nothing to do with the initial creation but simply affirms that God worked for six days, putting the earth (Sailhamer would identify that as Eden) in order for the first humans.

PROBLEMATIC CLAIMS OF HISTORICAL LAND CREATIONISM

(1h) *In the Genesis 1:1 era, God created sea and land; and all plants and animals.* In addition to creating “the heavens and the earth” in 1:1, God created “the seas, the dry land, and the plants and animals that inhabit them.”⁸⁴⁹ “The many biological eras would also fit within ‘the beginning’ of Genesis 1:1, including the long ages during which the dinosaurs roamed the earth. By the time humans beings were created on the sixth day of the week, the dinosaurs already could have flourished and become extinct—all during the ‘beginning’ recorded in Genesis 1:1.”⁸⁵⁰

As far as I know, only gap theory advocates and John Sailhamer claim that land and all kinds of life were created before the six days. But the text is silent about any such creation in 1:1. An argument from silence is weak indeed.

(1i) *All earth’s history up to the six days’ work on Eden took place in Genesis 1:1.* “Within that ‘beginning’ would fit the countless geological ages, ice ages, and the many climatic changes on our planet.”⁸⁵¹

⁸⁴⁶ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 95.

⁸⁴⁷ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 106-107.

⁸⁴⁸ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 107.

⁸⁴⁹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 56.

⁸⁵⁰ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 29.

⁸⁵¹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 27-45.

I think Sailhamer may recognize that his argument for the creation of land and life in Genesis 1:1 is an argument from silence. He says, “To be sure, Genesis 1:1 does indeed teach that God created the whole universe, but the rest of the chapter (1:2-31) is about His preparing the promised land.”⁸⁵² In other words, he recognizes that the only creation explicitly stated in 1:1 was the universe, including our planet. His claim is that 1:2–31 refers to Eden, so, by default, all other creation must have taken place in 1:1. However, this reasoning seems rather circular.

(2) *In God’s second creation act in Genesis 1:2—2:29, in six days God prepared the Land, Eden, which would become the future Promised Land.* “In the second period (Genesis 1:2-2:4a), God prepared the garden of Eden for man’s dwelling; that activity occurred in one week.”⁸⁵³ Sailhamer proposes that the six days involved working solely on the “Land” of Eden, not on the planet “earth.”

However, Eden is not mentioned until Genesis 2:8 *in an entirely separate narrative*, Adam’s narrative. It seems isogesis to import Eden into the previous heavens and earth narrative from a later narrative.

(2a) *The “earth” in Genesis 1:2—2:4a was the Land of Eden.* The English words “land” and “earth” come from the same Hebrew word עֶרֶץ (*‘āretz* from *‘eretz*). Sailhamer suggests “a change in meaning from the first to the second verse.”

However, “the earth” are the last words in 1:1 and “and the earth” are the first words in 1:2, indicating that “earth” is one and the same—unless strong contextual evidence confirms that they are not. Such evidence is missing.

Sailhamer claims that the Sinai Covenant with Israel to give them the Promised Land is a major theme of the Pentateuch. Therefore, עֶרֶץ (*‘āretz* from *‘eretz*), starting in Genesis 1:2, was the Promised Land. He says, “This is the strongest argument for taking the setting of Genesis 1 and 2 as the promised land.”⁸⁵⁴

However, Genesis 1—11 has a “whole earth” perspective (8:9, 9:19, 11:1, 11:4), not an Israel or Sinai Covenant perspective, which begins with Abraham in Genesis 12. If this is Sailhamer’s strongest argument, it is very weak.

⁸⁵² Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 225.

⁸⁵³ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 29.

⁸⁵⁴ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 52.

(2f) *In the first act of the third day's work, God made "pools" called "seas" in Eden.* The problematic nature of claiming that the six days involved God's work in Eden becomes evident in the gathering of waters into seas and causing land to appear. Sailhamer claims, "We should not think of the 'oceans' when we read that God named the 'pools of water' the 'seas' in Genesis 1:10. In Hebrew, any 'pool' of water—regardless of the size—is called a 'sea.'"⁸⁵⁵ "For example, the bronze basin made for temple worship is also called a 'sea' (see 1 Kings 7:23-25, 39, 44)."⁸⁵⁶

I would respond that there is no problem in the semantic range of יָמִים (*yamîm*, "seas") including the basin. But were basin-like pools in Eden what the third day's work involved? And if the "seas" were merely "pools" in Eden, how did the dry land appear from only enough water to make ponds?

(2i) *On the fifth day, God introduced sea and air life (created in 1:1) into Eden.* "What then is the focus of God's work on the fifth day? It is simply to populate the promised land with the various creatures that were created 'in the beginning.'"⁸⁵⁷

However, on the fifth day God uses the special word בָּרָא (*bārā'*, "create"). The word בָּרָא (*bārā'*) does not mean "introduce" sea and air animals into Eden.

(2j) *On the sixth day, God introduced land animals into Eden and created humans.* Sailhamer claims that the animal life was introduced into (or possibly created in) Eden on the sixth day.

If God created sea and air life on the fifth day supposedly only in Eden which the verb בָּרָא (*bārā'*) seems to require, surely the act of the sixth day was not just to "introduce" animals into Eden. I agree with Sailhamer that "human life did not originate until the sixth day of the work recorded in Genesis 1:2-4a."

PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF HISTORICAL LAND CREATIONISM

(1) *In God's first creation act in Genesis 1:1, He created the universe—including the earth, sun, moon, and stars—as well as all extinct and living plants and animals.* "In the first act, God created the universe we see around us today, consisting of the earth, the sun, the

⁸⁵⁵ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 126.

⁸⁵⁶ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 254.

⁸⁵⁷ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 141.

moon, the stars, and all the plants and animals that now inhabit (or formerly inhabited) the earth. The biblical record of that act of creation is recounted in Genesis 1:1—‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.’⁸⁵⁸

I respond that the text of Genesis 1:1 says God created the heavens and earth and that this was His first creation act, but 1:1 says nothing about “all the plants and animals.” Since “plants and animals” are not mentioned until the third through the sixth days, the second part of his claim is based on Biblical silence.

(2b) *The Land of Eden and the Promised Land are the same.* “The boundaries of that garden are the same as those of the promised land; thus the events of these chapters [Genesis 1—2] foreshadow the events of the remainder of the Pentateuch.”⁸⁵⁹

We may agree that Eden was in the Middle East possibly including the promised land, yet not accept Sailhamer’s thesis that the six days were limited to Eden.

(2c) *In the six days, God prepared the already created Land of Eden for mankind.* We may agree that God worked six normal days, and we may even agree with the NIV past tense rendering of Genesis 2:8: “Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden,” indicating that this garden had been part of God’s work during the six days. But there is no statement in Genesis 1 or 2 that God worked *only* in Eden during the six days.

(2g) *Also on the third day God made only seed plants (with fruit for humans), so He made other green plants mentioned in Genesis 1:30 previously.*

Sailhamer is a Hebrew scholar and he may be correct that “According to the Hebrew text only ‘fruit trees’ were created on the third day.” “At the conclusion of the chapter, other plants are mentioned [בְּיַד הַיְהוָה יָצְרָה כָּל־צֶמַח יָבֵר, “every green plant”] that also are for . . . food for animals (Genesis 1:30).” “The account thus assumes that such plants already were present in God’s world.” So far Sailhamer has presented solid exegetical evidence, but then he takes a leap not from the text but from his own theory.

“This means that all those things [vast plant and animal life] were created as part of ‘the heavens and earth’ in Genesis 1:1,”⁸⁶⁰ so the plants on the third day were planted by God only in Eden for Adam and Eve.

⁸⁵⁸ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 14.

⁸⁵⁹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 15.

⁸⁶⁰ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 32.

However, no text evidence confirms this last statement. In fact, Genesis 1:2 forbids Sailhamer's view of vast plant and animal life supposedly created on earth in 1:1. "The earth" are the last words in Genesis 1:1. "And "the earth" are the first words in Genesis 1:2. "Earth" in both verses has to refer to the same planet earth. In Genesis 1:2 planet earth was not only תֹהוֹ וְבוֹיָא (tōhū v^ābōhū, uninhabitable and empty of life or uninhabited), but also sea covered (so without land for any land animals or plants) and dark, so no green plants could grow.⁸⁶¹ Sailhamer, despite all his other great insights, is simply wrong in his belief that the six days solely involved God's preparing the Land of Eden.

(2h) *God created the sun, moon, and stars in Genesis 1:1, not on the fourth day.*

"Though our English translations of Genesis often suggest that God created the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day, the Hebrew text does not demand, *or even allow for*, such an interpretation. The overall sense of Genesis 1 assumes that by the fourth day, the sun, moon, and stars are already in place."⁸⁶² So far Sailhamer has based his claim on solid exegetical evidence.

But then Sailhamer goes on to claim that all God did on the fourth day was speak: "God spoke." I know of no one else who would agree with John Sailhamer on this last claim. This idea is simply needed by his "Eden only" view.

However, יִהְיֶה (y^ehî, "let be") from הָיָא (hāyâh, "to be") in Genesis 1:16 is "jussive in both form and meaning."⁸⁶³ The jussive expresses a third person command. God commanded the luminaries to be in the expanse of the sky to separate day and night. Genesis 1:16 reports that God אָסָא ('āsâh, "do, make") the greater and lesser luminaries to govern day and night. These were actions. So Sailhamer is right that the luminaries were not created on the fourth day but that there were real acts done on that day, namely making the luminaries to be in the sky to govern day and night for the first time. Before day four, they were in the universe but were obscured from carrying out their functions in relationship to the earth.

LARGELY SUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF HISTORICAL LAND CREATIONISM

(00) *Have no unexamined assumptions.*

⁸⁶¹ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 93.

⁸⁶² Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 30-32.

⁸⁶³ WTM morphology in BibleWorks for Windows.

I agree wholeheartedly with this preunderstanding.

(0) *Recognize that we can be wrong.*

Again, I agree wholeheartedly.

(Practice 1) *Start with the Bible text; after exegesis, relate the meaning to science.*

We must first understand the biblical text and then seek to relate its meaning to the findings of modern science, if possible.”⁸⁶⁴ This is a good approach.

(Practice 2) *View the text from the perspective of the writer and original readers.*

I agree, but I would emphasize the original author’s perspective somewhat over the reader’s.

(1a and b) *Genesis is a series of narrative units of real events, the creation unit being 1:1—2:4a.*

Sailhamer correctly emphasizes, “The author [of Genesis 1—2] clearly intends us to read his account of creation as literal history, . . . a historical account of creation.”⁸⁶⁵ “Some conservative scholars” propose that “Moses used a collection of clay tablets which had preserved the accounts of creation, the flood, and the lives of the patriarchs.”⁸⁶⁶ Thus Moses would have written [Genesis] in much the same way as Luke says he wrote his gospel (cf. Lk. 1:1-4.)”⁸⁶⁷ “The account of those events and persons exhibits all the traits of historical trustworthiness.”⁸⁶⁸ I agree.

(1c) *Genesis 1:1—2:4a introduces the Sinai covenant by identifying Who God is—the Creator—and what He has promised—the Land.*

Sailhamer insightfully explains: “The purpose of 1:1 is not to identify this God in a general way but to identify him as the Creator of the universe.”⁸⁶⁹ “We may conclude . . . with a summary of Genesis 1:1-2:4a. The author intends his Creation account to relate to his readers that God, the Creator of the universe, has prepared the land as a home for his special creature, the human being, and he has a plan of blessing for all his creatures.”⁸⁷⁰ What a great insight!

⁸⁶⁴ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 44.

⁸⁶⁵ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 45.

⁸⁶⁶ R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1969, 547-553), footnote in Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 23.

⁸⁶⁷ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 23.

⁸⁶⁸ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 23-24.

⁸⁶⁹ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 82.

⁸⁷⁰ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 29.

(1d) *Genesis 1:1 is not a mere chapter title but was the actual ex nihilo creation.*

Sailhamer is correct: “What many people fail to realize is that such an understanding of Genesis 1:1 [that it might be regarded as merely a title to the rest of the chapter] rules out a fundamental notion in the traditional view—the idea that God created the world ‘out of nothing.’” “The first verse, a verbal clause, should be taken as an independent statement rather than a summary of the rest of chapter 1. Thus 1:1 describes God’s first work of creation *ex nihilo*, and the rest of the chapter describes God’s further activity.”⁸⁷¹ Sailhamer’s three reasons are cogent. “1. *In the original, the first verse is a complete sentence that makes a statement, but titles are not formed that way in Hebrew.*” “2. *The conjunction ‘and’ at the beginning of the second verse makes it highly unlikely that 1:1 is a title.*” “3. *Genesis 1 has a summary title at its conclusion, making it unlikely it would have another at its beginning*” (italics his). “[Genesis] 2:4a intends to serve as a title, while 1:1 does not.”⁸⁷² His evidence demonstrates that the title theory is wrong.

(1e) “*The beginning*” was a “*period of time*”⁸⁷³ with a “*starting point,*” length unspecified.

I agree: “The term [תַּיְהִימָּוֹת, *b^erēshît*, “in the beginning”] does not refer to a point in time but to a *period* or *duration* of time which falls before a series of events.” “In Job 8:7 the word *reshit* refers to the early part of Job’s life, before his misfortunes overtook him.” “Within the Book of Genesis itself, the author uses the term *reshit* to refer to the early part of Nimrod’s kingdom (Genesis 10:10).” “According to Jeremiah 28:1, for example, the ‘beginning’ [*reshit*] of King Zedekiah’s reign included events which happened four years after he had assumed the throne.”⁸⁷⁴ “Since the Hebrew word “*beginning*” refers to an indefinite period of time, we cannot say for certain when God created the world or how long He took to create it.”⁸⁷⁵ Just as the “end times” will be a period of time, so was the “beginning.” “The duration of time [was] unspecified.”⁸⁷⁶ John Sailhamer, like me, believes the beginning time period was unspecified in length by the Bible, so he, too, affirms an undated earth creation (UEC).

⁸⁷¹ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 82, footnote 2.

⁸⁷² Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 102-103.

⁸⁷³ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 14.

⁸⁷⁴ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 38-39.

⁸⁷⁵ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 14.

⁸⁷⁶ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 28-29.

(1f) *In Genesis 1:1 God created the entire universe including earth.*

“Heavens and earth” in Genesis 1:1 is a merism that expresses the creation by God of everything else including “the sun, the moon, and the stars.”

(1g) *The young earth creation theory improperly attempts to date the beginning of the universe by Adam’s genealogy.*

Sailhamer is correct about the YEC idea: “It assumes that the ‘beginning’ of creation (Genesis 1:1) occurred in the first day of the week.” But the beginning occurred *before* light began daylight of day one, ending in evening, night, and morning.

(1j) *Tōhû vābōhû in Genesis 1:2 means uninhabitable wilderness, not chaos.*

The meaning of *tōhû vābōhû* is “uninhabitable” and “wilderness” “that had not yet become inhabitable for human beings.”⁸⁷⁷ Jeremiah 4:23–26 uses the same terms with the sense of “deserted and uninhabited.”⁸⁷⁸

(1k) *The gap theory is wrong; there was no catastrophe and so no restoration.*

“There are no ‘gaps’ in the creation account of Genesis 1, nor is there a ‘re-creation’ or ‘restoration’ of an original creation.”⁸⁷⁹

(2d) *The light on day one was diffuse sunlight.*

“If the sun is meant to be included in the merism ‘sky and land’ in Genesis 1:1, then it is natural to assume that the sun was created already in the first verse. If that is so, then the ‘light’ of verse 3 was simply the light of the sun.” “The expression ‘there was light’ is one way the Bible refers to sunlight.”⁸⁸⁰ Exodus 10:23 says, “Israel had light.” The Hebrew, אֶרְאָה אֹרֶךְ (hāyâh ôr, “have/had light” qal perfect 3rd ms) is very similar to Genesis 1:3, אֶרְאָה אֹרֶךְ (yêhî ôr “have/had light” qal perfect 3rd ms). Both were sunlight.

(2e) *In the second day’s work, God caused the clouds to rise from the sea. The young earth creation theory’s claim of interstellar water vapor as part of initial chaos is wrong.*

“Biblically, the ‘waters above the heavens’ are simply the clouds which provide rain.” The “expanse” is best understood by our English word “sky.”⁸⁸¹

The young earth creation theory’s claim that the waters above the expanse were a major part of the chaotic cosmological universe is simply wrong. Frank DeRemer says, “The

⁸⁷⁷ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 63-64.

⁸⁷⁸ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 65.

⁸⁷⁹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 44.

⁸⁸⁰ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 56.

⁸⁸¹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 117.

luminaries were not made until Day 4, probably from the ‘waters above the expanse.’ ” He claims the extended sense of רָאֲקִיָּא (rāqīā’, “expanse”), where the luminaries are now located, applies to the second day, rather than the local sense of “where the birds fly” (1:20). The expanse in the second day (1:6–8) with the “water above” was the local meaning of clouds, *not* pre-galactic water vapor, because clouds would have made sense to Adam, Moses, and Israel. In God’s second day of work, the clouds rose from the sea surface, forming an expanse of open air called sky.

(2k) *Exodus 20:11 does not describe the initial creation of the universe but is a list of God’s work for six days.*

“Exodus [20:11] does not use the merism ‘heavens and earth’ to describe God’s work” as if God created the whole heavens and earth, meaning everything, *in* the six days. “Rather, it gives us a list of God’s distinct works during the six days.” “This list refers to God’s work in Genesis 1:2-2:4, *not* to his creation of the universe in Genesis 1:1. Exodus 20:11 does not say God *created* ‘the heavens and earth’ in six days.”⁸⁸² *Asah* does not mean create *ex nihilo* but “put something in good order, to make it right.” Sailhamer is correct.

SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL LAND CREATIONISM

God created the heavens and the earth in the time period of the beginning in Genesis 1:1. He also made land and oceans along with most plant and animal life, but not true humans, in Genesis 1:1. The Bible does not say how long this beginning time period was in which earth was created (UEC).

Recently, in six literal days, God prepared the Land of Eden (future Promised Land) for humans. Genesis was written when Israel was in Sinai telling them that their God is the Creator and showing how the Promised Land, as part of the Sinai Covenant, is the place to return to a relationship with God, as in Eden.

John Sailhamer has many wonderful insights into the Genesis text that should be remembered and emphasized by myself and by many others in the future. But his claim that the six days involved only God’s work preparing Eden is so problematic that this claim should, as he said, “slip into a quickly forgotten past.”⁸⁸³

⁸⁸² Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 106-107.

⁸⁸³ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 17.

11. Two-Stage Biblical Creation (2SBC)

Two-stage Biblical creation is my own theory. I developed it first from the Hebrew and Greek Bible text. But none of it is new or novel. All the parts can be seen in one or more of the other theories. So for this study I have taken it from the most Biblically supported claims of the other theories. One of the weaknesses of many of the authors of the other theories is that they only defended against the other theories rather than listening to the wisdom of other exegetes of Scripture. They often failed to stand on the shoulders of the Biblical giants who preceded them. I have studied over two dozen creation theories and have greatly profited in nuancing my understanding of the Bible's teaching on creation by the input of almost every theory that preceded me.

I will express my theory more fully after examining the other theories by the four diagnostic questions. In summary, the two stages are very simple:

(1) *God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning before the six days, but earth was unfinished—uninhabitable and uninhabited, and its sea surface thick cloud darkened.*

(2) *God finished earth by eight command units involving six day-night cycle workdays, making earth lighted, habitable, and inhabited.*

I gratefully acknowledge our Lord's kindness to me in allowing me to attempt to understand this theory as I frequently prayed for understanding of His Word. I also freely acknowledge that I am most definitely *quite* errant, and that prayer for understanding is answered by making me a little less errant, *not* inerrant. I welcome peaceful suggestions from the Bible text for improvement in my understanding of what God said that He did when He created the heavens and the earth.

Before we evaluate the ten theories plus this eleventh theory by the four diagnostic questions, I will summarize about a dozen minor theories. Some provide additional insights into creation. But I will not be including them in the evaluation by the four diagnostic questions.

CHAPTER 6

MINOR CREATION THEORIES

The following are over a dozen additional creation theories. Some have been developed only briefly. Some are too far off the mark to offer much that is helpful. Others are only about biological creation, not the creation of the heavens and earth. Therefore, I have chosen not to include these in the ten major theories. I have also included my nuanced version of the two-stage creation theory as number eleven.

11. Earlier Versions of Two-Stage Creation

Charles Hodge, the well-recognized nineteenth century Princeton theologian, gave a general statement of two-stage Biblical creation as one of the two main alternative creation theories. “Some understand the first verse of Genesis to refer to the original creation of the matter of the universe in the indefinite past, and what follows [that is, the six days] to refer to the last reorganizing change in the state of our earth to fit it for the habitation of man.”⁸⁸⁴ (Charles Hodge leaned toward the other main theory of his time, the day-age theory.) I came to the same two-stage Biblical creation conclusion independently as I struggled with problems in young earth creation, the gap theory, and later Hugh Ross’s day-age theory and as I sought answers from the Hebrew and Greek Bible texts on creation. None of the two-stage Biblical creation theory claims is new or novel. All the parts can be seen in one or more of the other theories. So for this study I will be presenting the two-stage Biblical creation theory from the most Biblically supported claims of the other theories. One of the weaknesses of some of the authors of the other theories is that they only defended against competing theories rather than listening to the wisdom of these previous exegetes of Scripture. They often failed to stand on the shoulders of the Biblical giants who preceded them. I have studied over two dozen creation theories and have greatly profited in nuancing my understanding of the Bible’s teaching on creation by the input of almost every theory that preceded me. Advocates of other theories are not enemies but fellow strugglers seeking to understand what God said in the Bible that He did when He created the heavens and the earth.

⁸⁸⁴ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology, Abridged Edition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 210.

I will express my nuanced version of two-stage Biblical creation (2SBC) more fully after examining the other theories by the four diagnostic questions. In summary, the two stages are very simple:

(1) *God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning before the six days, but earth was unfinished—dark, sea-and-cloud-covered, uninhabitable, and uninhabited.*

(2) *God finished earth in six day-night cycle workdays, making earth lighted, habitable, and inhabited.*

This theory is a Biblically *undated* earth creation (UEC) theory, as opposed to old earth creationism (OEC) or young earth creation (YEC). The two-stage Biblical creation theory claims that the Bible does not date the universe or earth—other than that they must be at least five days older than Adam, and that they had a beginning so are not eternal. Bible genealogies roughly date Adam, not the creation of the heavens and the earth.

I did not realize the two-stage theory had already been stated in simple form as I was developing my version of the theory. It is, however, gratifying to discover that I have not developed a novel new theory, but that other Christians have had the same understanding of creation before me.

12. Undated Universe and Earth; Young Biosphere

Because of young earth creationists' criticisms of Gorman Gray, I recently discovered the work of this author, a retired engineer and Bible college graduate. He has done a good study, although without some of the Hebrew resources that one might wish he had been able to use. He holds the preunderstanding of "the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and absolute authority of the autographs" based on Matthew 5:18.⁸⁸⁵

First, Gorman Gray correctly realizes that "Scriptures leave the age of the stellar heavens and planetary foundational earth undefined." Therefore, "the sun, moon, basic earth, and stars are undefined in age."⁸⁸⁶ He holds to undated or undefined age earth creation (UEC). He rejects the grammatically problematic gap theory, stating, "No time passes between verses 1 and 2 as required by gap theorists." He is correct in this rejection of the supposed gap between verses 1 and 2 because the grammar does not allow time passage

⁸⁸⁵Gorman Gray, *The Age of the Universe: What Are the Biblical Limits* (Washougal, WA, Morningstar Publications, 2000), 19.

⁸⁸⁶ Gray, *Age Limits*, 18.

between verses 1 and 2. Instead, he says, “Time for an inorganic earth *is allowed* between verse 2 and verse 3.”⁸⁸⁷ I think he erred in seeing the primary time passage option as having taken place between 1:2 and 1:3, rather than within בְּרֵשִׁית (*b^erē'shît*, in the beginning).

Second, he also correctly realizes that the Scripture teaches that the six days were normal day-night cycle “solar days.”⁸⁸⁸

Third, he correctly realizes that these six “solar days of divine work took place *after* the original creation of the stellar heavens and planet earth.”⁸⁸⁹

Fourth, the second part of his theory’s title, “young biosphere,” comes from his claim that “the origin of man and everything biological is recent.” “However, the same Scriptures limit all *biological* life and the construction of the biosphere itself to less than 8,000 years.”⁸⁹⁰

Fifth, he claims that the Bible text limits the appearance of dry land because dry land began in day three, and consequently limits land geology to less than 8,000 years ago. Therefore, he concludes that life is also limited to less than 8,000 years old. He bases the higher date on the Septuagint as a possible alternative text with its longer list of patriarchs.⁸⁹¹

Sixth, since life is limited to less than 8,000 years old, he then claims that “evolution of any type is, therefore, categorically impossible.”⁸⁹²

Seventh, Gray agrees with Henry Morris in that “most geological features of the earth’s crust resulted from the worldwide cataclysm—the Genesis Flood of five or six thousand years ago.”⁸⁹³

Eighth, he follows Hebrew scholar Bernard Northrup’s excellent translation of Exodus 20:11: “For six days (Yahweh) worked on the air, the land, and the sea and all that is in them.”⁸⁹⁴ Northrup has correctly left out the “*in*” that is not in the Hebrew text. I personally would translate הַשָּׁמַיִם (*ha shāmayim*, heaven, heavens, sky, abode of stars) as “sky” rather than “air,” among other reasons, because “sky” would have made more sense to Moses than “air.” Sky, not air, was an ancient Hebrew concept.

⁸⁸⁷ Gray, *Age Limits*, 19.

⁸⁸⁸ Gray, *Age Limits*, 18.

⁸⁸⁹ Gray, *Age Limits*, 18.

⁸⁹⁰ Gray, *Age Limits*, 18.

⁸⁹¹ Gray, *Age Limits*, 18.

⁸⁹² Gray, *Age Limits*, 18.

⁸⁹³ Gray, *Age Limits*, 18.

⁸⁹⁴ Gray, *Age Limits*, 18.

Problematic weaknesses: Gray makes an overly hard separation between בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”) and עָשָׂה (*'āsāh*, “do, make”). However, עָשָׂה (*'āsāh*, “do, make”) is so broad that it overlaps in a general way many Hebrew words, including some senses of בָּרָא (*bārā'*, “create”). Gray does not need to make that overly hard separation between the two words to point out that *bārā'* has a specific sense in Genesis 1:1—to make for the first time, theologically nuanced by Hebrews 11:3 as creation *ex nihilo*—that *'āsāh* does not convey in Exodus 20:11 or in Genesis 1:16. We must translate by context, especially such a broad word as *'āsāh*. Northrup is correct by translating *'āsāh* in Exodus 20:11 as “worked on,” because that is the contextual meaning, although I would translate it “did work on,” because the root sense of *'āsāh* is “do, make.”

Gray also translates *'āsāh* in Genesis 1:16 as “brought forth.” That is a listed meaning of *'āsāh*, but I think Gray misses the sense in this context. The context of Genesis 1:16 is found in Genesis 1:14–15, which contains God’s actual command, יְהִי (*y^hhî*, “let be”), from the verb הָיָה (*hāyā^h*, “to be”) in the sky for the listed functions in relation to the earth. I suggest that we cannot translate *'āsāh* in Genesis 1:16 into English with a single word. Perhaps “brought forth” may be a small part of the nuanced sense, but contextually that is not really the point. God made the luminaries be in the sky to function in relationship with the earth for the benefit of its future living inhabitants for several purposes—to separate and govern day and night; to be signs for seasons, days, and years; and to be lights in the sky. Genesis 1:16 reports that God *'āsāh*, made, the luminaries be in relationship with earth and its future inhabitants for these listed functions. God did not *bārā'*, create, the luminaries on day four, or the Spirit would have used the word *bārā'* as He did with sea creatures. The reason He did not use the word *bārā'* is that God had already *bārā'*, created, the luminaries as a major part of the heavens in Genesis 1:1.

So we may honor Gorman Gray for coming closer in the hermeneutical spiral to understanding what God said that He did. Gorman Gray has several weaknesses, perhaps because of his limited Hebrew tools. Overall, he has done a very good study.

13. Vision Theory or Pictorial-Day Theory

The vision theory claims that the narrator had six visions ending in six evenings. The six visions were of the six stages of the creation and were seen in six day-night cycle days.

This theory may sound like Wiseman's *Creation Revealed in Six Days*, but Wiseman makes the definite distinction that the Bible text does not support "visions." Verbal communication, however, is supported. The Bible text states, "And God said," not, "And God gave visions." When visions were given, as in Jeremiah 4:23–24, the text clearly states that they were visions. Even S. R. Driver agrees: "The narrative contains no indication of its being the revelation of a vision (which in other cases is regularly noted, e.g. Amos 7-9; Isa. 6; Ezek 1, etc.); it purports to describe not appearances ('And I saw and behold . . .'), but facts ('Let the earth . . . and it was so'), and to substitute one for the other is consequently illegitimate."⁸⁹⁵ There is no hint of visions in Genesis 1. Rather, Genesis 1 was given as a verbal narrative in words. Wiseman's and Driver's critiques are sufficient.

14. Antedate Sabbath Theory

The antedate theory claims that the Sabbath antedated the writing of Genesis, so the author/compiler of Genesis tailored his text to support the Sabbath. S. R. Driver explains his theory,

Genesis 2:1-3, it will be observed, does not name the sabbath, or lay down any law for its observance by man; all that it says is that God 'desisted' on the seventh day from His work and that He 'blessed' and 'hallowed' the day. It is, however, impossible to doubt the introduction of the seventh day as simply part of the writer's representation, and that its sanctity is in reality antedated: instead viz. of the seventh day of the week being sacred, because God desisted on it from His six days' work of creation, the work of creation was distributed among six days, followed by a day of rest, because the week, ended by the sabbath, existed already as an institution, and the writer wished to adjust artificially the work of creation to it. In other words, the week, ended by the sabbath, determined the 'days' of creation, not the 'days of creation the week.'⁸⁹⁶

Driver claims that Genesis was an eighth century B.C. document compiling Israel's oral traditions, including the creation narrative borrowed largely from Babylon. Driver posits that the Sabbath command long antedated Genesis. So Genesis was compiled and edited partially in an attempt to give credence to that earlier fourth command.

⁸⁹⁵ S. R. Driver, *Genesis*, Vol. 1, 1893, 23; quoted by P. J. Wiseman, *Revealed*, 28.

⁸⁹⁶ S. R. Driver, *Genesis*, Vol. 1, 1893, 23; quoted by P. J. Wiseman, *Revealed*, 28.

Wiseman responds, “I suggest that it is a most remarkable fact that the alleged unknown writer of Genesis does not mention the word ‘sabbath’. Surely he would have done so if he had been engaged on such an attempt to ‘fake’ the narrative as described by Dr. Driver. Not to have done so would be fatal to his purpose.”⁸⁹⁷ Wiseman then argues cogently for an ancient eyewitness tablet origin of the eleven units of Genesis and that these sources of Genesis preceded the Ten Commandments. The narratives and genealogies on these tablets from known original sources were compiled in the wilderness by Moses. If Wiseman is even close to correct, Driver’s theory has no merit.

15. Myth of Legend Theory

This theory claims that especially the earlier parts of Genesis are simply myth in the sense of story without actual basis in historical events. However, since this theory originated, the tablets at Nuzi, Ebla, and Mari have yielded much data that correlates closely with the Hebrew narrative. Sewell points out, “The Mari archives contained actual names used in the Bible—Peleg, Terah, Abram, Jacob, Laban, and others. These cannot be linked directly with Biblical characters, but they do show that these names were in use in those early days. The Nuzi archive had some 20,000 clay tablets; many were legal documents describing laws and customs of the land. These explain a number of Biblical incidents that used to seem strange to us, but they were simply the normal customs of that era.”⁸⁹⁸ I would add that the data in Genesis 1 correlates too closely with recent astrophysics discoveries about the universe to have been merely ancient myth.

16. Poetic Hymn of Creation Theory

The poetic hymn view of Genesis 1 suggests that although not strictly poetry, Genesis 1 has Hebrew poetic repetition, Hebrew alliteration not apparent in translations, along with the use of the numbers three, seven, and ten. The text is in eight repetitive strophes with repetitive beginnings and endings. These strophes align into two parallel sets—the first three days of four strophes and the parallel last three days also of four strophes. The whole was intended for repetition recited by a bard as oral literature. Its intent was a monotheistic

⁸⁹⁷ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 28.

⁸⁹⁸ Sewell, “Tablet,” *Spade*.

counter against the false polytheistic idolatrous religions that surrounded Israel. The objects surrounding people—the greater and lesser lights, stars, sea, land, trees, animals, and all humans—were created by the one true God. Moreover, God is “He,” a person Who spoke, saw, made, divided, named, and blessed. In addition, He *alone* is the great Creator of all the things around us. The purpose is doxological and theological rather than historical origin narrative with scientific implications. The final strophes show who man is and what he is to be and to do, and finally the hymn gives the example of the Sabbath.⁸⁹⁹

There are many insights in this view. But one also would respond that this view indulges in the either/or fallacy. This view suggests that Genesis 1 was doxological and theological *rather than* an historical origin-narrative with scientific implications. Why not both?

17. Intelligent Design Theory (ID)

“The theory of intelligent design holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection.”⁹⁰⁰ The modern version of the theory began with Philip Johnson’s *Darwin on Trial*. Joining him was Michael Behe, author of *Darwin’s Black Box*, and William Dembski, author of *Intelligent Design*.

I have not included intelligent design as a major theory about Bible creation because the intelligent design theory *is not about the Bible*, Biblical creation, or even theism. It is an insightful theory, but it is not a Bible theory.

Intelligent design presents the concept that if a phenomenon of the observable universe is best explained by intelligent causes, not simply that we cannot explain it *yet*, then an intelligent design cause should be considered.

Intelligent design is not just that the eye or some other organ seems less likely to have developed by chance. The physical constants of the universe and earth (gravity, strong and

⁸⁹⁹ James I. Packer, *God’s Words: Studies of Key Bible Themes* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1981).

⁹⁰⁰ Center for Science and Culture, “Top Questions,” <http://www.discovery.org/csc/topQuestions.php>.

weak nuclear force, expansion rate of the universe, etc.) are so precisely fine-tuned for human life on planet earth as to essentially *require* a Fine-Tuner.⁹⁰¹

I have worked in an archeological dig. In the science of archeology, we differentiate a potsherd from a rock by whether the characteristics exhibit an intelligent cause within human history. If the artifact, such as a decorated pot (usually broken) or stamped image-bearing coin, is explainable only by an intelligent cause, then we may conclude that it was designed by intelligent people of the historical culture of the era who left that level of debris at that site. The same criteria can be applied to the universe. The evidence for probability that the universe was intelligently designed with the physical parameters so precisely tuned for human life is far greater than the evidence for intelligent design of the piece of broken goblet—glass with a green glass bead decoration—that my wife and I found in our dig.

So it would seem that the theory of intelligent design is an insightful and important theory, but it is not a Bible theory.

18. Concordism Theory

Concordism began in the 19th century with the rise of science and has continued into the 21st century. Concordism is the idea that the Bible account of creation, when properly interpreted, will be in concord, or agreement, with true science. An outstanding example is seen in the work of Hugh Ross. If we pass over his problematic day-age interpretation, much of his writing reveals a wonderful concord between the Bible and cosmology.

The problem is that modern naturalistic science and the Bible actually disagree at the most fundamental level. Russian Orthodox Theodosius Dobzhansky criticized young earth creation in his 1973 essay titled, “Nothing in Biology Makes Sense Except in the Light of Evolution.”⁹⁰² Dobzhansky believed that God worked through chance-driven evolution. Chance is the very basis, the *sine qua non*, of evolution. Non-theistic scientists and philosophers claim that the whole of reality—increasingly understood by physics, astronomy, biology, geology, etc.—is chance-driven. A recent exposition of chance-driven designless

⁹⁰¹ John D. Barrow and Frank J. Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).; Ross, *Cosmos*, 154-157.; *Fingerprint*, 121-138; Paul Davies, *Cosmic Jackpot*, (New York: Orion Publications, 2007); Peter Ward and Donald Brownlee, *Rare Earth*, (New York: Copernicus Books, 2004).

⁹⁰² Theodosius Dobzhansky, “Nothing in Biology Makes Sense Except in the Light of Evolution,” *American Biology Teacher*, volume 35 125-129.

evolution is Richard Dawkins' *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design*.⁹⁰³

In contrast, the Bible speaks of “all things” in God’s creation as “having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:11, NASB). According to Paul, *nothing ever happened purely by chance*—not ever. If adaptation to environmental changes occurs by mutation and variation, overpopulation, and survival with differential reproduction by the fittest for microevolution, it can only be one of God’s designed laws and overseen by God. Paul claims that the ultimate driving force of “all things” is God. Richard Dawkins claims that blind chance *alone* guides naturalistic evolution. Dawkins explains that if God intervened supernaturally “at any one stage of descent,” then the development of life “was not evolution at all” but rather “divine creation.”⁹⁰⁴ Ultimately, either God controls or chance controls. Since the Bible teaches that God controls not just “one stage” but “all things” (Eph. 1:11), then at the most fundamental level, I conclude that there can be no concord between the Bible and current philosophically naturalistic science.

On the other hand, there is complete concord between the Bible and actual facts from the creation, because God is the ultimate Author of the Bible and the Creator of the universe.

So if concordism is attempted between the Bible and current naturalistic science, then concordism faces an insurmountable barrier. But if concordism is between the Bible and the creation, it is natural.

19. Ideal-Time or Omphalos Theory

God created the universe and earth in six normal days about 6,000 to at the most 10,000 years ago—all purposefully with the appearance of age. Adam and Eve had navels (omphalos) as if they had been born normally, even if they were not. Trees appeared instantly with annual tree rings. The universe appeared instantly in its full immensity and apparently very old, but it really was only an instant old.⁹⁰⁵ Everything had appearance of age.

⁹⁰³ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design* (New York: W. W. Horton, and Co., 1996).

⁹⁰⁴ Dawkins, *Watchmaker*, 248-249, 317; quoted by Stephen Jones, <http://creationevolutiondesign.blogspot.com>

⁹⁰⁵ Philip Henry Gosse, *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot* (London: Routledge, no date; republished John Van Voorst, 1957).

This theory has been attacked ethically, religiously, and philosophically as deceptive. It certainly would appear to make the Creator a deceiver. It would even be scientifically deceptive, because the true age of the universe or anything in it apparently older than 10,000 years would be untestable. This apparent deception has been identified as the weakness of this theory. I would suggest one caveat: A short-term appearance of age need not deceive if the person present knows about it. Suppose theoretically that God caused the Garden of Eden to grow extra rapidly after He put Adam in the Garden. (The Bible does not say this, and I am not affirming it.) If Adam witnessed the extra-rapid growth, he was not deceived. He could rejoice in God's work. But if the universe is about 6,000 years old yet appears to be between 13 and 15 billion years old (which I am not claiming), then that would seem to make God a deceiver.

We were not there to see evidence that the universe is actually young, and astrophysicists have yet to find evidence that it is young. The Bible itself nowhere explicitly claims that the universe is about 6,000 years old. In fact, nowhere does the Bible explicitly claim any particular age for the creation of the universe other than that it must be a few days older than Adam and that it is not eternal because it had a beginning. And nowhere does the Bible explicitly claim that the creation has appearance of age. So the omphalos claim is not a Biblical claim. And it presents a big problem ethically, philosophically, and religiously.

20. Mediate and Immediate Creation Theory

Charles Hodge summarized a view of creation that is an alternative to the day-age view: "Some understand the first verse of Genesis to refer to the original creation of the matter of the universe in the indefinite past, and what follows [that is, the six days] to refer to the last reorganizing change in the state of our earth to fit it for the habitation of man."⁹⁰⁶ Hodge leaned more toward the day-age view rather than two-stage Biblical creation. But he did identify initial immediate (instantaneously begun *ex nihilo* by fiat command) and later mediate (mediated out of materials, sometimes using secondary causes) creation with those two stages:

Mediate and Immediate Creation

⁹⁰⁶ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology, Abridged Addition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 210.

But while it has ever been the doctrine of the Church that God created the universe out of nothing by the word of his power, which creation was instantaneous and immediate, i.e., without the intervention of any second causes; yet it has generally been admitted that this is to be understood only of the original call of matter into existence. Theologians have, therefore, distinguished between a first and second, or immediate and mediate creation. The one was instantaneous, the other gradual; the one precludes the idea of any preexisting substance, and of cooperation, the other admits and implies both. There is evident ground for this distinction in the Mosaic account of the creation.... In Genesis 1:27 it is said that God created man male and female; in chapter 2:7 it is said that ‘the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground.’ It thus appears that forming out of preexisting material comes within the Scriptural idea of creating.... There is, therefore, according to the Scriptures, not only an immediate, instantaneous creation *ex nihilo* by the simple word of God, but a mediate, progressive creation; the power of God working in union with second causes.⁹⁰⁷

We certainly agree with the initial *ex nihilo* creation of matter out of nothing, begun instantaneously by “the word of his power.” We may agree that after the initial creation, God used the already created material, at times using secondary causes, to complete His work. We need not agree that the mediate creation involved either evolution or long days.

21. Days of Proclamation, Days of Fiat, or Announcement Theory

The days of proclamation theory consists of three big claims. First, on each of the six normal days, all God did was proclaim or announce His intention. Second, time passed between each day. Third, during the time *after* each day, that announcement eventually was fulfilled.

Frederick Capron included this theory in the middle of a tome. Capron’s theory was excised and presented by Dallas Cain in *Creation and Capron's Explanatory Interpretation*. Alan Hayward, in *Creation and Evolution*, more recently developed the theory.⁹⁰⁸ Hayward claims that the announcement came within the day. Then time passed between the days. During the time between the days, the announcement was fulfilled. On day one God announced His intention to light earth. “Had there been an observer present he might have had to wait many millions of years for the gases to thin sufficiently for the first gleams of

⁹⁰⁷ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I (London:, James Clark & Co, 1892, Reprinted, 1960), 556-557; or Charles Hodge, *Abridged*, 206-207.

⁹⁰⁸ Alan Hayward, *Creation and Evolution*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005).

light to penetrate to the liquid surface.”⁹⁰⁹ After each announcement day was a time period for the fulfillment and then evening and morning before the next announcement. Hayward re-punctuates Genesis 1:3–5 thus:

And God said, ‘Let there be light.’ (*And there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.*) And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Hayward re-punctuates the passage to express his theory that all the fulfillment, dividing, evaluation, and naming events in the parentheses took place after that day. The only event in day one was the proclamation, “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ ” and then the day ended with evening and morning. The fulfillment occurred in the millions of years that followed that day of announcement.

There are several problems with the first and foundational claim in this theory—that what God did on each of the six days was simply announce His intent. Hayward quoted the ASV, but he changed the punctuation. Punctuation is not inspired, so, in principle, re-punctuation may not be wrong. However, Hayward’s re-punctuation is wrong for a grammatical reason. That reason is illustrated by this: he leaves out of the ASV quote one key word, “And.” That “And” in “And God called” is a *vav* consecutive. A *vav* consecutive tells the next consecutive action. One could paraphrase it, “and next this happened.”⁹¹⁰ There are nine “and” clauses or phrases in Genesis 1:3–5. Seven of the nine “and” prefixes are *vav* consecutives that could be paraphrased “and next this happened.” This grammar shows that these events were sequential acts, the last two of which were “And there was evening and there was morning, one day.” Grammatically, all the other events had to have occurred before “And there was evening and there was morning, one day.” Hayward claims that innumerable days could have lapsed between God’s command “And God said, ‘Let there be light’ ” and the end of day one. But by definition, daylight followed by night equals one day. So if God’s command was carried out resulting in daylight, followed by night, then only one day passed by the end statement declaring that this was “day one.” Hayward’s key claim is wrong.

⁹⁰⁹ Hayward, *Evolution*, 174.

⁹¹⁰ They should not be translated “And next, . . .” but that is a simple way to explain the consecutive actions.

Even the very name of Hayward’s theory is wrong. God did not simply proclaim or announce that something was going to begin to happen over the next era of millions of years. God *commanded* the event. God commanded light; the text says, “And there was light,” or, more literally, “And light was.” The verb יָאֵר (y^ehî, “let be”) is “qal imperfect 3rd person masculine singular *jussive in both form and meaning apocopated*”⁹¹¹ (emphasis added). In other words, the command was in the third person so was a more mild form of command; nevertheless it really was a command, not just an announcement. Certainly results ensued over more than that single day, because we continue to have daylight even today. But surely daylight resulted *that* day (or it would not have been a day) at the command of God.

Closely related, I would say that it did not take a million years to light the previously dark surface of the ocean-covered earth. All it took was the first light to earth’s surface and, *voilà*, day one began. I see no grammatical basis for distancing between the jussive “announcement,” “And God said, ‘Let there be’ ” and the so-called “parenthesis,” “And there was.” Grammatically, the two events follow one after the other, resulting in day one.

Finally, Hayward’s claim of an “announcement only” oversimplifies the elements in the texts of each of the six days. These elements are far more complex than a simple announcement. Waltke identifies up to seven elements in the narrative of each of the eight sequential command units: “announcement, commandment, separation, report, naming, evaluation and chronological framework.”⁹¹² All of these precede the chronological clause of “evening” and “morning” *yôm* X. Something happened during the day that the Spirit reported and evaluated before each evening. The claim that only a proclamation or an announcement happened during that actual day does not fit the grammar of the text.

The second claim is that time passed between the days. This claim should be very carefully investigated. I will not investigate it here. I suggest caution with this idea, because the Bible text neither explicitly affirms nor explicitly denies time passage between the days. However, we may say that Hayward’s version of time passage with the fulfillment in the succeeding time era is incorrect.

The third claim is that the command was fulfilled—and continued for some time—*after* the proclamation day, during the time that passed between the days, even overlapping

⁹¹¹ BibleWorks for Windows, WTM morphology.

⁹¹² Bruce Waltke, *Genesis, A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2001), 56.

subsequent proclamation days. This seems to be a reasonable insight. On day three, God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation” (Gen. 1:11, NASB). Surely vegetation continued growing after the command day. The problem with the first claim and this third claim is that the grammar of Genesis 1:11–13 indicates that the vegetation *began* sprouting and was evaluated by God as “good” *during that very day*.

Alan Hayward’s version of the days of proclamation concludes that “evolution is still a very long way from being proved.” So although heavily questioning Darwinism, perhaps Hayward leaves the door ajar to theistic evolution. In contrast, he sees the evidence for an ancient earth as stronger than the uncertain evidence for evolution. “Evolution is not proven; the Biblical doctrine of creation still stands; but the evidence for an ancient earth is unshakable.”⁹¹³ Hayward is definitely an old earth creationist (OEC). The point relevant to this study is that Hayward is adamant that vast time passed between the days.

We may conclude that the key claim of this days of proclamation theory, the idea that the only event in the day was the “announcement,” is fundamentally flawed.

22. Time between the Days Theory

J. Barton Payne and others have suggested that time passed, even extensive long eras, between the six day-night-cycle workdays.⁹¹⁴ Their idea allows for old earth creationism (OEC), yet with six day-night-cycle days and no necessity of theistic evolution.⁹¹⁵

Yom, in Genesis 1:5, etc., is the Hebrew word for “day.” Some, then, have concluded that if Scripture teaches creation in six consecutive days, its creationism becomes unacceptable. But the literal text reads, “one day” (1:5), “a second day” (1:8), etc.; so the days need not be taken consecutively but may be understood as separated by long ages. Each day would then indicate a normal, twenty-four hour period, by the time of the arrival of which, the major phenomena which God had been creating since the previously mentioned day, had at length come into being.”⁹¹⁶

Although both espouse time between the days, J. Barton Payne’s theory otherwise is

⁹¹³ Hayward, *Evolution*, 204

⁹¹⁴ J. Barton Payne, “Theistic Evolution and the Hebrew of Genesis 1–2,” *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 8 (1965), 87.

⁹¹⁵ Payne, *Theistic*, 85.

⁹¹⁶ Payne, *Theistic*, 87.

the opposite of the days of proclamation theory. According to the days of proclamation theory, the development of the item commanded occurred *after* the day of command. But according to J. Barton Payne's time between the days theory, the development of the item commanded occurred largely *before* that day and was only completed on the day of the command. There is a third alternative that neither Hayward nor Payne mentions—that the item commanded was made *within* that day, perhaps with preconditions that developed during time passage before the specified day, and expanded fulfillment during time passage after the specified day; but the command and fulfillment occurred *within* that very day-night cycle day.

The problem with Payne's claim is that development of the fulfillment largely *before* the specified day seems to be a claim from Biblical silence.

The two-stage Biblical creation theory urges caution with the idea of time passage between the days, because the Bible neither explicitly affirms nor explicitly denies time passage between the six day-night-cycle workdays. Biblical evidence both for and against time between the six days is implicational, not explicit. Moreover, the fulfillment before or after the day seems problematic. The third option might be considered very cautiously, very tentatively, as perhaps a possibility. So the two-stage Biblical creation theory strongly suggests caution with Payne's idea and instead insists on Biblically *undated* earth creation (UEC).

Additional Creation of Life Theories

A number of creation of life theories do not consider the creation of the universe, the subject of this study. I will list them briefly but will not pursue them in this study.

23. Evolutionary Creationism Theory (EC)

Evolutionary creationism is a form of theistic evolution that emphasizes that God “front-loaded” the laws and parameters of the universe so that life and eventually man would develop inevitably. This view is similar to deistic evolution in that God does *not* need to continue to tweak the laws and parameters of the universe and life. But unlike the distant God of deism, this view recognizes that God is very involved in relationship with humans throughout history, including today.

24. Progressive Creationism Theory (PC)

This is the theory of the formation of life that is the biological part of the expanded theory held by Hugh Ross. God supernaturally intervened and created life at critical stages up through the creation of humans. Humans did *not* evolve with common ancestry in a microbes-to-men succession. At the end of the sixth era, with the creation of Adam and Eve, God ceased his creation work.

The “testable creation model for life’s beginning” by Hugh Ross and Fazale Rana “ascribes life’s origin to God’s direct creative activity soon after the time of Earth’s formation, more specifically to the time of the ocean’s formation, prior to complete transformation of Earth’s atmosphere from opaque to translucent.”⁹¹⁷

Their model of human origin “views Adam and Eve as historical individuals—the first human beings—originating by God’s miraculous intervention approximately 70,000 to 50,000 years ago. Adam and Eve’s descendents formed a small initial population that eventually gave rise to all human population groups around the world.”⁹¹⁸

This theory of life could be held separate from Hugh Ross’s “day-age” or “long day” form of old earth creationism (OEC). For example, one could claim day-night-cycle days with one of the three versions of time passage between the days, along with progressive creationism.

25. Theistic or God-Guided Evolution (TE/GGE)

Theistic or God-guided evolution believes that the current model of evolution is approximately correct and will be further corrected by science, but it also believes that God supernaturally guided evolution. In contrast to evolutionary creationism (EC), theistic or God-guided evolution (TE/GGE) emphasizes God’s guidance not only in the initial conditions but also God’s eminent precise guidance *throughout* the process from the conditions for life and the beginning of the first life through the present day.

⁹¹⁷ Ross and Rana, *Origins* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004), 42.

⁹¹⁸ Ross and Rana, *Adam* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2005), 42.

26. Deistic Evolution Theory (DE)

Deistic evolution is similar to evolutionary creationism (EC), which claims that God set up the universe in its beginning so that life and man would appear on earth. The distinct feature of deistic evolution is the claim that once God created the universe, He distanced Himself from His creation.

Other creation theories exist that I have not included, but these listed theories are most of the main creation theories. Twenty-six theories are too many to evaluate easily, especially as some are so complex. Moreover, some of these theories are very brief or are primarily about life rather than including the initial creation. Therefore, I have chosen to evaluate only the ten major theories plus the combined eleventh. Next we will evaluate these eleven major theories by the four diagnostic questions.

CHAPTER 7

EVALUATING ELEVEN THEORIES BY FOUR DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

What does the Bible say God did when He created the heavens and the earth? The ten creation theories, along with the eleventh proposed combined theory, answer four pairs of diagnostic questions differently. (A) Does Genesis 1 indicate that the days were six daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle creation days? Or does the text indicate six long day-age geological eras or non-creation days? (B) In Genesis 1:1 during the beginning, did God create *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) the orderly cosmos and unfinished planet earth? Or was there chaos that God transformed into the orderly cosmos in the six days? (C) Did God create the stated life kinds once—by the eight command units and the six day-night-cycle days? Or did He create the stated life kinds twice—once long before the six days and then a second time during the six days? (D) Did God create “the heavens and the earth” “in the beginning,” before day one? Or did He create the earth and the heavens *in* day one? We will sort the eleven theories, eliminating inadequate theories by these diagnostic questions and key creation texts.

It seems helpful to briefly review the eleven major creation theories.

1. *Pre-creation Chaos Theory*. Before creation in Genesis 1, God and chaos existed.

God creatively entered the chaos, turning it into orderly cosmos in the six days.¹¹⁴² Genesis 1:1 did not involve not *ex nihilo* creation.

2. *Initial Chaos Theory*. In Genesis 1:1 God created *ex nihilo* the heavens and earth as unformed chaos. The chaos is described in Genesis 1:2. In 1:3–31 God turned this chaos into cosmos in six days, whether normal day-night-cycle days or day-eras.

3. *Title or Summary Theory*. Genesis 1:1 is not God’s declaration of the initial creation of the heavens and earth but is a title or summary of Genesis 1:2–31.¹¹⁴³ There is no *ex nihilo* creation in Genesis 1. This theory integrates the pre-creation chaos theory, Genesis 1:1 as solely a title or summary of 1:2–31, and the literary framework understanding of the six days.¹¹⁴⁴

4. *Young Earth Scientific Creationism Theory*. All of creation, including Genesis 1:1–2, was created within the six days (Exod. 20:11). “God created the world, the universe, and everything in them in six ordinary, twenty-four hour days.”¹¹⁴⁵ God created “all space (heavens), all time (beginning), and all matter (earth),”¹¹⁴⁶ and this “*ex nihilo* creation of the universe by God [was] on the first day.”¹¹⁴⁷ Then on day four God “placed these ‘lights’ [sun, moon, and galaxies of stars] . . . being made of the same ‘earth’ that had been created on Day One.”¹¹⁴⁸ Since Adam is dated roughly 6,000 years ago,¹¹⁴⁹ the universe (including the earth) is a few days older. The flood formed most fossils.

¹¹⁴² Three forms of this theory are based on three of the four grammatical constructions of Genesis 1:1: (1) Genesis 1:1 is a dependent temporal clause subordinate to the main clause of 1:2. “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void” (NRSV). (2) Genesis 1:1 is a dependent temporal clause subordinate to the main clause of 1:3, so 1:2 is a parenthesis of earth’s chaos before God began creating. “When God began to create heaven and earth—the earth being unformed and void...—God said, ‘Let there be light’ ” (*Tanakh*, 2003). (3) Genesis 1:1 is a title or summary of 1:2–31, so the creation began in 1:2 with the preexisting chaotic earth (Bruce Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001], 58). These are refuted by Copan and Craig in *Creation out of Nothing* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004). Copan, Craig, and I agree that (4) Genesis 1:1 is an independent clause of God’s *ex nihilo* creation in the beginning of the heavens and earth, followed by the six days.

¹¹⁴³ Probably all the other theories agree that Gen. 1:1 has an introductory quality as well as being the initial creation act, but in this theory the acts of God are in 1:3–31. Gen. 1:1 is *only* a title.

¹¹⁴⁴ Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3, Part III: The Initial Chaos Theory and the Precreation Chaos Theory,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:527 (July–Sep. 1975), 216–228; Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 55–78.

¹¹⁴⁵ Ken Ham, Andrew Snelling, and Carl Wieland, *The Answers Book* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1990), 89.

¹¹⁴⁶ Henry M. Morris, *Biblical Creationism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994), 20.

¹¹⁴⁷ Morris, *Creationism*, 19. Morris posits that this “earth” matter throughout the “darkness of space” was “unformed,” so this theory appears to be a special case of the initial chaos theory.

¹¹⁴⁸ Morris, *Creationism*, 20.

¹¹⁴⁹ Some may hold 4004 B.C., but most allow 6,000 to as much as 10,000 years ago.

5. *Theistic Big Bang Theory*. In the beginning God created the big bang, which began with light, initiating the first of six eras, forming the universe and the earth. Relativity's time dilation allows fifteen billion years to be six days on God's "Eternal clock."¹¹⁵⁰

6. *Old Earth Day-Age Progressive Creationism Theory*. In the beginning God created *ex nihilo* the universe (apparently by the big bang) and planet earth. But earth's water-covered, cloud-darkened surface was uninhabitable. Narrated from the Spirit's perspective just above the water surface, God made planet earth habitable and then progressively created life on earth in six long day-age geological eras. The second revelation, the creation, dates the universe at about fifteen billion years old.¹¹⁵¹

7. *Literary Framework Theory*. The eight commanded creation works form a nonliteral and nonsequential literary framework, revealing the real historical creation events in thematic rather than chronological order. The Genesis 1 framework does not date the universe.¹¹⁵²

8. *Creation Revealed in Six Days Theory*. In six days God revealed Genesis 1 in six brief narratives, recounting six past creation eras. This creation account was passed on and later recorded on a clay tablet (or tablets). Moses collated the writing on this tablet from Noah, Shem, Isaac, etc., into the book of Genesis.¹¹⁵³

9. *Gap, Reconstitution, Re-creation, or Ruin-Restoration Theory*. In the beginning God created *ex nihilo* the heavens and the earth. During a long gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, God created life, which flourished, died, and formed fossils. At Satan's fall (Isa. 14:12–15; Ezek. 28:12–17), earth *became* chaos, forming more fossils. Then (leaving the fossils in place) in six day-night-cycle days of restoration, God reconstituted earth and recreated life. God commanded light (we may infer that sunlight penetrated the cloud layer) to earth's surface, producing literal day one. On the fourth day, God commanded the already created luminaries to be in the expanse of earth's sky to separate day and night.¹¹⁵⁴

¹¹⁵⁰ Gerald L. Schroeder, *Genesis and the Big Bang* (NY: Bantam Books, 1990), 49–53.

¹¹⁵¹ Hugh Ross, *The Genesis Question* (Downers Grove, IL: NavPress, 1998).

¹¹⁵² Lee Irons and Meredith G. Cline, "The Framework View," in David G. Hagopian, *The Genesis Debates* (Mission Viejo: Crux Press, 2001); Kline, "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* (1996), 48; Arie Noordtzi, *God's Word and the Testimony of the Ages*.

¹¹⁵³ P. J. Wiseman, *Creation Revealed in Six Days* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1948); Hugh Miller, *Testimony of the Rocks* (1857).

¹¹⁵⁴ G. H. Pember, *Earth's Earliest Ages* (NY: H. Fleming Revell Co., 1900); Arthur C. Custance, *Without Form and Void* (Brookville, Canada: self-published, 1970); critiqued by Weston W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1976).

Genealogies date Adam but not the universe, so the universe is undated by the Bible.

10. Historical Land Creationism. In the beginning God created the heavens and earth along with land and all life kinds in Genesis 1:1. Later, in six day-night-cycle days in the narrative of 1:2–31, God prepared Eden (future Promised Land) and introduced life into it for humankind.¹¹⁵⁵

11. Two-Stage Biblical Creation Theory: Stage One: In the beginning God created *ex nihilo* the orderly heavens and unfinished planet earth (Gen. 1:1). Transition: But earth was still uninhabitable and uninhabited, and its water-covered surface was cloud-darkened (Gen. 1:2; Job 9:7; 26:7–9; 38:8, 9). The Spirit’s location was stated (Gen. 1:2) (apparently for His perspective in His upcoming narrative). Stage Two: By the eight command units of Genesis 1:3–31 involving six day-night-cycle workdays, God made planet earth’s sky, sea, and land lighted, habitable, and inhabited with life. God commanded light (we may infer that sunlight penetrated the cloud, reported by the Narrator above the ocean surface), producing day one. On a fourth workday God commanded the already created luminaries to be in the expanse of earth’s sky (from the Narrator’s perspective) and made them separate and govern day and night; be signs for seasons, days, and years; and be lights in the expanse of the sky (we may infer through the first openings in the cloud cover [Job 26:13a]). Genealogies roughly date Adam, not the universe.

(A) DAY-NIGHT-CYCLE DAYS OR DAY-AGE GEOLOGICAL ERAS?

The first pair of diagnostic questions are: Does Genesis 1 indicate that the days were six daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle creation days? Or does the text indicate long day-age geological eras or non-creation days?

CREATION THEORIES OF NON-DAY-NIGHT-CYCLE OR NON-CREATION DAYS:

- 1. Pre-creation Chaos Theory.* The days were “metaphorical.”¹¹⁵⁶
- 5. Theistic Big Bang Theory.* The big bang began six eras in the universe.
- 6. Progressive Creationism Theory.* God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning;

¹¹⁵⁵ John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1996).

¹¹⁵⁶ Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 77.

then in six long earth day-age eras God made earth habitable and created life.

8. *Creation Revealed in Six Days Theory*. God gave Moses six narratives about six geologic ages of God's work.

CREATION THEORIES INDETERMINATE WHETHER DAY-NIGHT-CYCLE DAYS

7. *Literary Framework Theory*. The eight command units and six days were nonsequential and may or may not have been day-night-cycle days.

2. *Initial Chaos Theory*. God created chaotic matter in Genesis 1:1 from which He fashioned the universe and earth in six normal day-night-cycle days or non-day-night-cycle days.

3. *Title or Summary Theory*. Genesis 1:1 titles or summarizes a six-part literary framework, not six literal day-night-cycle days.

CREATION THEORIES OF SIX DAY-NIGHT-CYCLE DAYS

4. *Young Earth Creationism*. God created unformed earth on day one and made the sun, moon, and stars from earth matter on day four of six literal day-night-cycle days.

9. *Gap Theory*. God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning. After a time gap involving the destruction of life, in six day-night-cycle days He reconstituted earth and re-created life.

10. *Historical Land Creationism*. God created the heavens, earth, and life in the beginning. Then in six day-night-cycle days He made Eden habitable and inhabited.

11. *Two-Stage Biblical Creation Theory*. After God created the heavens and unfinished earth in the beginning, then by eight command units and six normal day-night-cycle workdays, He made planet earth lighted, habitable, and inhabited.

Did Moses intend יוֹם (yôm, "day") to mean a normal day-night-cycle day or a long day-age era? The semantic range of יוֹם (yôm) includes both a normal day-night-cycle day and an eschatological era (although it would be a severe stretch to include a geological era). However, in any text, the semantic range of meanings is narrowed to a specific meaning by the genre, syntax, context, and semantic field of alternative words that were not chosen. Young earth creationist Stambaugh has thoroughly defended six normal

day-night-cycle days, and I will draw some of my explanation from his work.¹¹⁵⁷

On the other hand, it would seem helpful to avoid the fallacy of the excluded middle that either יוֹם (yôm) was a long era based on data suggesting an older universe, or יוֹם (yôm) was a day-night-cycle day and the universe is only 6,000 years old. The Bible may indicate another option.

LIMITS ON MEANING OF YOM IN GENESIS 1

John Feinberg said that for accurate communication, words must have a referent that forms an “ontological tie to the world.”¹¹⁵⁸ The word יוֹם (yôm) has the referent (in modern terminology) of one axial rotation of the earth in the presence of sunlight on one side, so it can refer to “the period of light (as contrasted with the period of darkness)” or to “the period of twenty-four hours”¹¹⁵⁹ or “daylight, day (twenty-four hours)”¹¹⁶⁰ as the two literal senses. The second sense, or the twenty-four-hour sense, is the basic time unit in Hebrew.¹¹⁶¹ Coppes lists a third sense of “a general vague ‘time,’ ”¹¹⁶² often of trouble. Only once within Genesis, in 35:3, is this vague sense of “in the day of my distress” used. This vague sense does not seem to fit with the time-specific terms surrounding יוֹם (yôm) in Genesis 1. A fourth sense is the nonliteral, prolonged, future “eschatological day,” such as “the day of the Lord,” which relates to the referent as a future specific period of time. Genesis 1 is not about future eschatological events, so this eschatological sense does not fit Genesis 1.¹¹⁶³ A fifth use is the common construct יוֹם בְּ (b^eyôm, “when”), which, if it refers to a specific day, is best translated “on/in the day when,” or, if used in the more general sense of time (Gen. 2:4), is best translated simply as “when.” It is unreasonable to

¹¹⁵⁷ Jim Stambaugh, “The Days of Creation, A Semantic Approach,” *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 7:2, Fall 2003, 42-68.

¹¹⁵⁸ John S. Feinberg, “Truth: Relationship of Theories of Truth to Hermeneutics” in Earl Radmacher, *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 35.

¹¹⁵⁹ R. Laird Harris, et al, eds., “Yom,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 370.

¹¹⁶⁰ P. A. Verhoef, “Yôm,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Vol. 2, Willem VanGemeren, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), #3427, 419-424.

¹¹⁶¹ Emil G. Hirsch and Michael Friedländer, “Day,” *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 475: repeats the same two literal senses, “In the Bible, the season of light (Gen. 1:5) lasting from dawn [literally ‘the rising of the morning’] to the coming fourth of the stars (Neh. iv.15, 17). The term ‘day’ is used also to denote a period of twenty-four hours (Ex. xxi 21).”

¹¹⁶² Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 370.

¹¹⁶³ Verhoef, “Yôm,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament*, 2:419.

claim that this construct forces a nonconstruct numbered $\square \square \square \cdot \cdot$ (*yôm*) with “evening” and “morning” in Genesis 1 to mean a geological era. From the semantic range of $\square \square \square \cdot \cdot$ (*yôm*), the two literal senses fit Genesis 1 quite naturally. Will genre, syntax, and context concur?

From its beginning to its end, Genesis was written as historical narrative genre (however unique in content), relating the real events from the creation of the heavens and the earth all the way to the death of Joseph. Eleven $\square \square \square \cdot \cdot$ (*tôl^edôt*, generational-annals, descendants, generations) sections form the structure of the history in Genesis.¹¹⁶⁴ The first, ending with Genesis 2:4a, covers the generations of the heavens and the earth, relating back to the creation from 1:1—2:3 and forward to the $\square \square \square \cdot \cdot$ (*tôl^edôt*) of Adam, which ends in Genesis 5:1a. Generations indicate a precise and accurate account of history—historical narrative genre. Moreover, Jesus and the New Testament writers assumed the historical nature of Genesis 1—3 (Matt. 19:4; 1 Tim. 2:13). Never once in Genesis did Moses employ the future eschatological day sense of $\square \square \square \cdot \cdot$ (*yôm*), which some old earth creation writers appeal to for long day-age geological eras.¹¹⁶⁵ In later eschatological genre, without sequential numbering, Zechariah 14:7 speaks of “one day,” (KJV) or “unique day” (NASB). Even this unique eschatological day may be a day-night-cycle because it will end in evening. It is unclear whether in Hosea 6:2 “days” and a “third day” refer to three day-night-cycle future days or to three longer eschatological time periods. Since both supposed exceptions are eschatological genre rather than historical narrative genre, neither has more than one number and both are unclear as to length; neither has significant influence on the sequentially numbered $\square \square \square \cdot \cdot$ (*yôm*) in the historical narrative genre of Genesis 1. The two literal senses of $\square \square \square \cdot \cdot$ (*yôm*)—twenty-four-hour day and daylight—fit the historical narrative genre of Genesis 1.

Of the ten occurrences of $\square \square \square \cdot \cdot$ (*yôm*) in Genesis 1, four refer to the daylight portion of the day and are accepted literally as daylight. The one plural $\square \square \square \cdot \cdot$ (*yamîm*) is accepted literally as days. Syntactically, the six occurrences of $\square \square \square \cdot \cdot$ (*yôm*) that are disputed are even more clearly daytime-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle days because they are associated with sequential ordinal numbers (after a cardinal “one”), daylight and

¹¹⁶⁴ The events recorded were selected with theological and redemptive considerations, but such selection does not negate their historicity.

¹¹⁶⁵ Hugh Ross and Gleason Archer, “The Day Age View” in David G. Hagopian, ed., *The Genesis Debate* (Mission Viejo: Crux Press, 2001), 148.

nighttime, and evening and morning, all day-night-cycle normal day indicators. Concerning the sequential ordinal numbers, even Newman admits that “no clear counter-example [of *yôm* repeated with sequential numbers] can be cited with *yôm* meaning a long period of time.”¹¹⁶⁶ Fretheim claims, “When the word ‘day’ is used in a numbered sequence, it always has reference to a normal day (cf. Num. 29).”¹¹⁶⁷ Other occurrences of a singular יוֹם (*yôm*) with a number and either evening or morning refer to a day-night-cycle twenty-four-hour day (e.g., Exod. 12:6). So in Genesis 1 each sequentially numbered יוֹם (*yôm*) with both evening and morning compellingly indicates a daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle day.

The context preceding the first numbered יוֹם (*yôm*) was the darkness of the sea surface, the location of the Spirit just above the sea, then the command unit for light in 1:3–5. This light to the watery surface of the rotating planet was the first daytime followed by the first nighttime, the latter begun by evening and ended by morning (the Hebrew designations for night in Exod. 27:21; Lev. 24:3; Num. 9:15; Deut. 16:4).¹¹⁶⁸ Since only God could have been the original Author of the creation account and Genesis 1:2 declared that the Spirit of God was “on location,” this strongly implies that the Spirit was the Narrator. So we may reasonably presume that Genesis 1:2—2:3 was narrated from His location perspective just above the planet surface. The Divine Narrator reported that the light had penetrated to His location just above the watery surface of the rotating planet. Then this first diffuse daylight was followed by night, we may infer, as His location rotated out of the diffuse sunlight into evening and night, then morning light as His location again rotated into the diffuse sunlight. He designated this as “day one.” These events could hardly be more explicitly a day-night-cycle day. Since the subsequent days were numbered sequentially, second, third, etc., and day one was the defining occurrence of יוֹם (*yôm*), then the subsequent five days were also day-night-cycle days.

Other Hebrew words in the semantic field of time signs could have signified duration of time or ancient time, but these were not used. Perhaps תָּוֶן (*et*, “time”) could have been

¹¹⁶⁶ Robert Newman and Herman Eckelmann, *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), 61, in James Stambaugh, *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 5(1):72 (1991).

¹¹⁶⁷ Terence E. Fretheim, “Were the Days of Creation Twenty-four Hours Long?” in Ronald Youngblood, ed., *The Genesis Debate* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986), 18.

¹¹⁶⁸ Robert V. McCabe, “A Defense of Literal Days in the Creation Week,” *Denver Baptist Theological Journal* 5 (Fall 2000), 107. Several of the ideas in this section are from McCabe.

combined with רַב־שָׁנִים (*sānîm rabôt*, “many years”), יָמֵי עוֹלָם (*yē mēm 'ôlām*, “days of old”) or יָמֵי אֲנִיּוֹת (*yamîm miqedem*, “days of antiquity”). But God chose singular *yôm*, sequentially numbered, with evening and morning, compellingly indicating six day-night-cycle days.

OBJECTIONS TO DAY-NIGHT-CYCLE *YOM* IN GENESIS 1

A common objection to understanding יּוֹם (*yôm*) in Genesis 1 as a day-night-cycle day is the construct בַּיּוֹם (*b^eyôm*, “in the day”) in Genesis 2:4b, beginning the second תּוֹלְדוֹת (*tôl^edôt*; generational accounts) unit referring back to God’s work over the whole just-completed creation narrative, which lasted more than one day.¹¹⁶⁹ However, Stambaugh explains that יּוֹם (*yôm*) in Genesis 1 is different contextually from בַּיּוֹם (*b^eyôm*) in 2:4, the latter having “no other ‘time’ words (for example, ‘morning’, ‘evening’, ‘night’, etc.) . . . nor is there a modifying number.”¹¹⁷⁰ McCabe explains that grammatically the בַּ (*b^e*, *bet*) is an inseparable preposition attached to יּוֹם (*yôm*) as a construct. When the context of this idiomatic construct בַּיּוֹם (*b^eyôm*) indicates a general time frame, as in Genesis 2:4b, it should be translated “when,”¹¹⁷¹ as in the NIV. Even old earth proponent Collins recognizes that בַּיּוֹם (*b^eyôm*) in Genesis 2:4b “gives us no information on the range of meanings of yom outside the bound [construct] form.”¹¹⁷² Thus, בַּיּוֹם (*b^eyôm*, “when”) in Genesis 2:4b should not convert the meaning of יּוֹם (*yôm*) in Genesis 1 to a nonliteral geological day-age era.

Another objection is that a human observer “didn't appear until day six.”¹¹⁷³ However, the Spirit was just above the rotating planet’s watery surface as a perfect Observer.

An objection is often raised against the young earth creationism theory’s claim that days one through three were day-night-cycle twenty-four-hour days in the absence of the sun. However, this objection does not apply to the gap, the historical land, or the two-stage

¹¹⁶⁹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 293.

¹¹⁷⁰ James Stambaugh, *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 5(1), 1991, 72.

¹¹⁷¹ McCabe, “A Defense of Literal Days in the Creation Week,” 117; Verhoef, “Yôm,” *New International Dictionary on the Old Testament*, 2:420; John Owens, *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 7.

¹¹⁷² C. John Collins, “How Old Is the Earth? Anthropomorphic Days in Genesis 1:1–2:3,” *Presbyterian* 20 (Fall 1994), 110.

¹¹⁷³ Dick Fisher, “Days of Creation: Hours or Eons?” *Perspectives on Science and Christ*, 42 (March 1990): 15–22. Also Schroeder, *Genesis and the Big Bang*.

Biblical creation theories, because these theories posit that the “heavens,” including the sun, were created “in the beginning.” So we may infer that the light on day one was diffuse sunlight penetrating down to and reported by the Narrator, Who experienced the succession of sunlight, then evening, then morning during all six day-night cycles at His location on the rotating planet. This Narrator’s perspective and His “day,” “evening,” etc., terms are strong evidence that He was narrating normal daylight-evening-nighttime-morning cycle days.

Another objection is God-defined days. Some day-age advocates claim that God may have used a relativity standard unknown to us to define the days as “God days” of billions of years. Also cited are Bible texts stating that to God a thousand years are “like yesterday” or “as a watch in the night” (Psa. 90:4) and “one day is like a thousand years” (2 Pet. 3:8). So “God’s days are not our days.”¹¹⁷⁴ But does Genesis 1 suggest God-defined long day-ages or the kind of days that humans, if they had been present, would have observed? The Narrator was just above the surface of the planet, a perspective that humans through the ages would understand. From this “human perspective” location, the Spirit repeatedly used human time-marker words—“day,” “night,” “evening,” “morning,” and “one day”—strongly indicating day-night-cycle days. Moses and his readers experienced just such day-night-cycle days with evening and morning on our rotating planet earth. Moses had no knowledge of relativity and “stretched time,” so he could not have meant a relativity defined “day.” Moses referred to the kind of day he experienced every day of his life. If words have no extralinguistic referent knowable by both the author/writer/speaker and the readers, then humans’ search for communication and truth ceases.

Disregarding apparent antiquity of the universe, the text itself supports the intent of יום (yôm) in Genesis 1 as six normal day-night-cycle days. So we lay aside non-day-night-cycle days theories. Before evaluating the four day-night-cycle day theories, let us consider whether God created orderly cosmos or chaos.

(B) CREATION OF COSMOS AND UNFINISHED EARTH OR CHAOS?

In Genesis 1:1 during the beginning, did God create *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) the orderly cosmos and unfinished planet earth? Or was there chaos that God transformed into

¹¹⁷⁴ Hugh Ross, *Creation and Time*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), 45.

the orderly cosmos in the six days? Different chaos theories disagree when chaos existed, but they all claim some degree of unformed chaos. Non-chaos theories claim that God created an orderly cosmos and unfinished (but not chaotic) earth in the beginning.

GOD AND CHAOS EXISTED BEFORE GENESIS 1:1.

1. *Pre-creation Chaos Theory*. God and chaotic matter existed before 1:1.
3. *Title or Summary Theory*. God and chaotic matter existed before 1:1, which is a title.

IN GENESIS 1:1 GOD CREATED CHAOTIC OR UNFORMED MATTER

2. *Initial Chaos Theory*. In the beginning in 1:1, God created chaotic matter.
4. *Young Earth Creationism*. God created the heavens as space and the earth as unformed matter throughout space in day one.

IN 1:1 GOD CREATED ORDER, BUT EARTH BECAME CHAOS

9. *Gap Theory*. In the beginning God created the universe as orderly cosmos, but Satan's fall resulted in earth becoming chaos.

IN 1:1 GOD CREATED ORDERLY COSMOS, BUT EARTH WAS UNFINISHED

10. *Historical Land Theory*. In the beginning God created the universe and earth as orderly cosmos, but "the Land" (Eden) was unfinished. God prepared Eden for man in six days.
11. *Two-Stage Biblical Creation Theory*. In the beginning God created the universe as orderly cosmos, but planet earth was unfinished. God finished planet earth for man in six workdays.

CHAOS NOT BIBLICAL CONCEPT

The concept of chaos apparently came from ANE mythology,¹¹⁷⁵ Greek cosmogony such as Hesiod's "Theogony," and the Greek Septuagint translation (LXX), and then entered many subsequent translations of Genesis 1:2. The LXX translation of Genesis 1:2 appears to have been influenced by Greek chaos cosmogony. The Greek terms chosen by the LXX

¹¹⁷⁵ Bruce Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1–3," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:526, 136.

translators are ὄρατος καὶ κατασκευάστος (“unseen and not properly prepared”¹¹⁷⁶). A secondary translation of the latter Greek term “unformed” was carried further by subsequent translations as “formless.” But “formless” with the idea of chaos is not the meaning of the inspired Hebrew. Bruce Waltke points out the problem with the idea that God created chaos: “Logic will not allow us to entertain the contradictory notions: God created the organized heavens and earth; the earth was unorganized.”¹¹⁷⁷ If the meaning is chaos, then Waltke is right, but what if the meaning is not chaos?

Genesis 1:2 begins with עָרָב וְחָשֶׁךְ (v^ehā'āretz, “Now the earth”), deliberately separating “the earth” from the merism of 1:1. Since the three subordinate clauses of 1:2 begin with the noun subject, they are disjunctive, describing the state of planet earth and identifying the location of the Spirit hovering above the water-covered surface.¹¹⁷⁸ After the all-inclusive merism “the heavens and the earth” in 1:1, the conspicuous absence of “heavens” from the description in 1:2 strongly implies that the heavens were largely completed cosmos. The double term תֹּהוּ וְבוֹהוּ (tōhū v^ābōhū, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) is applied only to planet earth. Moreover, תֹּהוּ וְבוֹהוּ (tōhū v^ābōhū) in subsequent texts does not indicate utter chaos but rather “uninhabitable and uninhabited.” Isaiah 34:5–15 describes Edom using these two terms because its people were slaughtered (so “uninhabited”) and its land burned and reverted to wild animals (“uninhabitable”). Jeremiah 4:23, alluding to Genesis 1:2, used תֹּהוּ וְבוֹהוּ (tōhū v^ābōhū) to describe Judah’s disaster. Jeremiah continued, “I looked, and behold, there was no man,” so Judah was “uninhabited.” “I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a wilderness,” so Judah was “uninhabitable” (Jer. 4:25–26). Wilderness and lack of people are “uninhabitable and uninhabited.” These are the only other occurrences of both תֹּהוּ (tōhū) and בֹּהוּ (bōhū) together. Neither occurrence supports the claims by the young earth creationism or chaos theories that earth was “unformed matter” or utter chaos. Rather, the water-covered, cloud-darkened planet was “uninhabitable and uninhabited.” So next God would make it lighted, habitable, and inhabited in the six workdays.

Laying aside non-day-night-cycle day theories and pre-creation and initial chaos theories, let us evaluate the four day-night-cycle days theories.

¹¹⁷⁶ H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 173, 48.

¹¹⁷⁷ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3” Part III, 219, quoting Plessis, *Supplément*, 716.

¹¹⁷⁸ E. Kautzch, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 454 [¶141*i*].

(C) LIFE CREATED ONCE OR TWICE?

Did God create the stated life kinds once—by the eight command units and the six day-night-cycle days? Or did He create the stated life kinds twice—once long before the six days and then a second time during the six days?

LIFE KINDS CREATED TWICE, BEFORE AND AGAIN DURING SIX DAYS

8. *Gap Theory*. Life was created twice, first in a time gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, then again much later during the six days.

9. *Historical Land Creationism*. Life was introduced twice, first created during “the beginning” in 1:1, then modern kinds either created in or introduced to Eden during the six days.

LIFE KINDS CREATED ONCE, *DURING* EIGHT COMMANDS AND SIX WORKDAYS

3. *Young Earth Creationism*. All life kinds were created only once, during the six day-night-cycle days.

11. *Two-Stage Biblical Creation Theory*. All stated life kinds were created only once, by God’s eight command units involving the six day-night-cycle workdays.

FIRST CREATION OF LIFE ARGUED FROM SILENCE

Both the gap and historical land theories defend the creation of the heavens, including the luminaries, “in the beginning” before the six days. John Sailhamer explains that Genesis 1 spanned “two distinct time periods”—the beginning, during which the heavens and earth were created, its “duration of time unspecified,” followed by the six days.¹¹⁷⁹

Both theories claim that God created a massive variety of life a first time during a time period before the six days. The gap theory claims that all ancient life was created in a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, grammatically highly improbable. The gap theory claims that all that ancient life was destroyed, and then all modern life was created *de novo* during the six days.

¹¹⁷⁹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 29.

Sailhamer claims that all life kinds were created during the beginning in 1:1, which he correctly recognizes was a time period, not an instant. Sailhamer emphasizes that God created “all that exists in the universe”¹¹⁸⁰ in Genesis 1:1. I agree if he means all the matter-energy of the universe including the galaxies of stars and raw planets. But in *Genesis Unbound*, he claims that God also created land and all life kinds on earth in 1:1. “Genesis 1:1 is clear that God created the sun, moon, and stars—as well as all the animals on the earth—‘in the beginning.’”¹¹⁸¹ In *Genesis Unbound* he claims that the six days involved only preparing Eden for mankind. Yet he agrees to the creation of sea creatures and flying life on day five and three groups of land animals and Adam and Eve on day six, but then he relates that creation back to Genesis 1:1. If I understand him correctly, he means that the creation of life on the fifth and sixth days was really the creation of life in Genesis 1:1 when God created “‘all’ the various kinds of animals ‘in the beginning.’”¹¹⁸² Then much later some specimens of that life created in 1:1 were “brought into the newly prepared waters and skies of the promised land” on the fifth day and onto the newly prepared Promised Land/Eden on the sixth day. I think he means that God physically transferred them to Eden. But he may mean that God created “all the various kinds” “in the beginning,” and later during the fifth and sixth days God created in Eden some new “good” specimens of some of the same kinds that He had created outside Eden back in Genesis 1:1. I suggest the second alternative because Sailhamer says, “God did create ‘some’ animals on the fifth day.”¹¹⁸³ There seems to be some confusion on this point, perhaps because it is simply incorrect and, therefore, there is no correct way to work it out. Either way, Sailhamer, as well as gap theory advocates, claims a first creation of land and of all the kinds of life—sea life, flyers, dinosaurs, etc.—*before* the six days.

Both theories face a major problem with their ideas of the first creation of life before the six days: the Bible has no explicit statement of a first creation of life in geologic ages before the six days. In addition, the gap theory has a grammatical problem of vast time passage and life between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. Genesis 1:2 includes three *vav* disjunctive (“now, but”) noun clauses describing earth’s condition. Grammatically, these descriptive

¹¹⁸⁰ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 83.

¹¹⁸¹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 138.

¹¹⁸² Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 138.

¹¹⁸³ Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 138.

clauses are not about events with time passage.¹¹⁸⁴ The grammar allows time passage in the beginning in 1:1 and again in 1:3–31. In fact, Genesis 1:2 (and possibly 1:30) are the *only* verses in chapter 1 not indicating time passage and events, which is rather fatal to the gap theory.

John Sailhamer in the historical land theory ably defends the creation of the heavens, including the luminaries, “in the beginning,” ית □ אַרְבָּעָה (b^ere’shît, “beginning”) as a time period of “unspecified” length (Gen. 10:10; Jer. 28:1) before the six days. He also ably defends the meaning of וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ (tōhû v^ābōhû) as “uninhabitable,” not “chaos.” After such an able defense, he argues mainly from silence that God created land and all life, including dinosaurs, during Genesis 1:1.¹¹⁸⁵ Then he declares, “From Genesis 1:2 on, the focus of the creation account is on that special place where human beings, God’s special creatures, are to dwell—the ‘land,’ ”¹¹⁸⁶ meaning the Land of Eden and future Promised Land. However, switching the meaning of אֶרֶץ (ha’āretz, “the earth”) at the end of 1:1 as “planet earth” to אֶרֶץ אֲדָמָה (v^eha’āretz, “and the earth”), meaning “Eden,” beginning 1:2 seems highly unlikely. Genesis 1:1b–2a would read “. . . God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth [meaning only Eden]. . . .” Sailhamer is almost certainly wrong. Both times “earth” means our planet. Stating that life on earth in 1:1 was vast and then limiting “earth” (the tōhû v^ābōhû condition) and the six days’ work in 1:2 to only Eden are problematic claims. Neither theory adequately defends a first creation of vast life before the six days.

We may now analyze the two remaining theories with the last diagnostic question.

(D) CREATION OF HEAVENS AND EARTH IN THE BEGINNING OR *IN* DAY ONE?

Did God create “the heavens and the earth” “in the beginning,” which beginning was initiated instantaneously and then continued for an unspecified time before day one? Or did He create the earth and the heavens *in* day one?

The two remaining theories are two variants of the day-night-cycle six-day creation theory. They are young earth scientific creationism (YEC), or the 6,000-year-old-universe

¹¹⁸⁴ Kautzsch, *Gesenius*, 450-2 [¶140a; ¶141a, b, and c footnote 2].

¹¹⁸⁵ Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 29.

¹¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 49, 82–84, 109.

theory, and the eleventh combined theory, the two-stage Biblical creation (2SBC) theory. They differ at four points: when God created the heavens and earth; whether “beginning” was very brief/instantaneous start of day one and “all time,” or the beginning time period of unstated length before the six days; what was $\text{וַיְהִי בְרֵאשִׁית}$ ($tōhû v^ābōhû$) and, therefore, the object of the work of the six days; and if the Bible dates the universe.

GOD CREATED EVERYTHING WITHIN THE SIX DAYS.

3. *Young Earth Scientific Creationism, or 6,000-Year-Old-Universe Theory.* (a) On the basis of Exodus 20:11, God must have created the heavens and the earth *in* six days. (b) No time existed before day one. The “beginning” was the first instant or hours of day one and yet also “all time.” (c) The whole universe was $\text{וַיְהִי בְרֵאשִׁית}$ ($tōhû v^ābōhû$) and dark, so the whole universe was lighted, finished, and filled in six days. (d) *The Bible* dates the universe to about 6,000 to at the most 10,000 years old.

GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND EARTH IN THE BEGINNING

11. *Two-Stage Biblical Creation Theory.* (a) On the basis of Genesis 1:1, God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning. Exodus 20:11 does not include “in” in the Hebrew. (b) The “beginning” was the beginning period of time before the six days, instantaneous in initiation, of unstated time length by the Bible. (c) Only planet earth was declared $\text{וַיְהִי בְרֵאשִׁית}$ ($tōhû v^ābōhû$, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) and dark. During the six workdays God made planet earth lighted, habitable, and inhabited. (d) The universe is undated by the Bible (over 6,000 years but finite in age), so the universe is however old it is, that is, undated earth creation (UEC).

Young earth creationists have rightly affirmed and capably defended a literal normal day-night-cycle interpretation of the six days, a literal Adam and Eve, and a literal worldwide flood. Both theories agree wholeheartedly on these three general big claims.

The banner verse of the young earth creationism movement, found on the front page of many of their past publications,¹¹⁸⁷ has been Exodus 20:11: “For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*” (KJV). Does the italics in the KJV

¹¹⁸⁷ This verse has appeared less frequently since the absence of the *bet* has been pointed out by my papers at Evangelical Theological Society meetings. Now, when Exodus 20:11 is headlined by the YEC publications, it is often *all in italics* to hide the fact that *in* is in italics in the KJV, meaning it is not in the original Hebrew.

mean that “*in*” (בְּ, *bet*, “in”) is emphasized, meaning everything was *created* “*in* six days,” or that “*in*” is absent from the inspired Hebrew text? The difference is profound. And does אֲשַׁר (‘*āsāh*, “do, make, fashion, create, perform work”¹¹⁸⁸) in Exodus 20:11, translated with the general term “made,” mean “created” *ex nihilo* in six days, meaning that the creation act in Genesis 1:1 took place *in* the six days and that everything was created *in* the six days? Or does אֲשַׁר (‘*āsāh*, “do, make, fashion, create, perform work”) in Exodus 20:11 in context mean that God “performed work,” fashioning the already created sky, land, and sea and all that is in them during the six days?

“IN SIX DAYS” PROBLEMATIC EXEGETICAL CHAIN

The young earth creationism movement has proceeded on the understanding that Exodus 20:11 emphasizes “*in*.” “For *in* six days the LORD made [in the sense of created *ex nihilo*] heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (KJV).¹¹⁸⁹ If God created everything, including time, “*in* six days,” then no time could have occurred “in the beginning” before day one on earth. “The primeval creation . . . was the first act of the first day of the six days, calling into existence . . . time” (emphasis mine).¹¹⁹⁰ If this were true, then God could not have created the heavens and the earth “in the beginning” before the six days. God had to have created the unformed universe *in* day one (or alternatively by two *ex nihilo* creations—unformed earth in day one and universe in day four).

“The tremendous events of creation week . . . began with the *ex nihilo* creation of the [unformed] universe by God *on the first day*” (emphasis mine).¹¹⁹¹ But if this were true and “the heavens and the earth” is a merism meaning everything in the universe, yet the theory posits that no sun, moon, and stars were created in the beginning, then “the heavens” in 1:1 must have been space without luminaries. “In Genesis 1:1, the term [heaven] refers to the component of space in the space-mass-time universe.”¹¹⁹²

¹¹⁸⁸ אֲשַׁר (*asah*, “make”) overlaps אֲבָרָא (*bara*, “create”) particularly in the sense of *creatio ex materia*, fashion out of already created materials (Gen. 2:7), and in summary of both *creatio ex nihilo* and *creatio ex materia*, all the work of creating and fashioning in Genesis 1 (Gen. 2:4, Neh. 9:6). אֲשַׁר may even overlap the sense of solely *creatio ex nihilo*. However, אֲשַׁר may also mean “perform work” and the context of the fourth command is work, not *creatio ex nihilo*.

¹¹⁸⁹ Some now drop this basis of their problematic series but retain the unsupported remainder.

¹¹⁹⁰ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994), 42.

¹¹⁹¹ Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, 19.

¹¹⁹² Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 41.

Also, if the merism means all matter was created, then “earth” must have been all the matter of the universe. “The term ‘earth’ refers to the component of matter in the universe.”¹¹⁹³ If this were true, and 1:2 says that “earth” was תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû vābōhû), then all that matter of the universe must have been תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû vābōhû), unformed chaos. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth [space and matter], and the matter so created was at first unformed and uninhabited,” “the force of gravity not yet functioning to draw such particles together into a coherent mass with a definite form.”¹¹⁹⁴ If this were true, then “earth” must be throughout not only space but also מַיִם, הַמְאֵיִם (hamāyim, “the waters”) of the תְהוֹם (têhôm, “primeval ocean, deeps of the sea”¹¹⁹⁵). “Initially . . . the earth had no form; and similarly, this state must apply to the waters also. The picture presented is one of all the basic elements sustained in a pervasive watery matrix *throughout the darkness of space*” (emphasis mine).¹¹⁹⁶ If this were true, then “darkness on the face of the deep” must have been darkness throughout all space, so the entire “physical universe” had “no light.”¹¹⁹⁷

If all the above were true, then God must have created four things *in* day one: “all space (heaven), all time (beginning), and all matter (earth),”¹¹⁹⁸ as well as the one commanded item, “light.” This light on day one must have been temporary light for three days, causing day and night on the amorphous mass of matter called “earth,” which was supposedly throughout space. If this were true, then planet earth was formed on the third day when God separated earth from the waters. “The planet was not formed until day 3. . . . Prior to that ‘earth’ was only some kind of amorphous prematter . . . ready to be made into the planet and other celestials.”¹¹⁹⁹ (Or alternatively, an unformed blob was separated on day one as our proto-planet rotating in the temporary light for day and night.)

If all this were true, then on the fourth day God must have made the sun, moon, and some hundred billion galaxies out of “earth” (or out of “watery matrix”), created on day one in Genesis 1:1. On day four God “placed these ‘lights’ [sun, moon, and stars] throughout the

¹¹⁹³ Ibid., 41.

¹¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 50, 51.

¹¹⁹⁵ Andrew Hill, *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Vol. 4, Willem VanGemeren, ed., Têhôm,” H9333, 275.

¹¹⁹⁶ Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 50.

¹¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 51.

¹¹⁹⁸ Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, 17; R. Grigg, “Answers for Kids,” *Creation* 27:4, 2005, 24–25.

¹¹⁹⁹ Frank DeRemer, “Young biosphere, old universe?” *Technical Journal of AiG* 19:2, 56.

infinite space of heaven that had been created on Day One, these also being made of the same ‘earth’ that had been created on Day One”¹²⁰⁰ or out of the “watery matrix.”¹²⁰¹ (Or, alternatively, the universe was created in a second *ex nihilo* creation, despite the fact that אִבְרָאָה [bārā’, “create”] is not in the fourth day command, and 1:1 says the heavens were created “in the beginning.”) If this were true, and in 1:14–17 God “made” the luminaries be “in” the expanse that He had formed on day two between the waters below and waters above, then the expanse made on day two must have been “interstellar space”¹²⁰² and the waters above somewhere in outer space.

Not all young earth creationists espouse all these points, but this is the logical sequence. I am not in any way denigrating the great Christian men who hold this view, but does the Bible say all this?

A side effect of this chain is that if all these claims were true, then the universe would have been created a few days before Adam, who is dated 6,000 to at the most 10,000 years ago, according to advocates of this YEC view. “As far as the creation of the universe is concerned, this took place five days earlier than the creation of man.”¹²⁰³ So the universe can be only 6,000 to at the most 10,000 years old. But that raises a problem for these scientific creationists. They honestly state, “The idea that observation of things further than around 10,000 light-years away is not necessarily linked to physical reality would be unsettling from both a scientific and theological viewpoint.”¹²⁰⁴ What Ken Ham and others mean is that in 10,000 years we should see light from events only up to 10,000 light-years away, because the light took 10,000 years to reach us. But we see Andromeda, the *nearest* spiral galaxy with several hundred billion suns, over two million light-years away. And at least a hundred billion more distant galaxies exist.¹²⁰⁵ These creationists honestly conclude, “There is currently no wholly satisfactory solution that is accepted by the majority of creation scientists.”¹²⁰⁶ But the universe must be between 6,000 and 10,000 years old if God created it “in six days.”

¹²⁰⁰ Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, 20.

¹²⁰¹ Frank DeRemer says “the luminaries were not made until Day 4, probably from the ‘waters above the expanse’ ” rather than from “earth.” “Young biosphere,” 55.

¹²⁰² Russell H. Humphreys, *Starlight and Time* (Colorado Springs: Master Books, 1995), 58.

¹²⁰³ Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 45.

¹²⁰⁴ Ham, *The Answers Book*, 193–194.

¹²⁰⁵ I am not suggesting an age for the universe but that the Bible does not declare its age.

¹²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 185. If the Bible does not date the universe, its age is no problem for two-stage Biblical creation.

However, there is no בַּ (bet, “in”), no “in,” in Exodus 20:11. The foundational first point of the whole above logical chain never existed.¹²⁰⁷ “In” was introduced by the LXX and carried into most English translations, some failing to follow the KJV, which correctly italicized “in,” alerting the reader that “in” is absent from the Hebrew.¹²⁰⁸ Other clauses beginning with כִּי בַּ (ki, “for”) are translated “for” (Gen. 2:5c; Exod. 20:7b). If God had intended “for in,” He could have used the common כִּי בַּ (ki bet, “for in”) as in Genesis 9:6: “For in the image of God.” Besides the LXX source, “in” is added for style. “For six days the LORD made the heavens” reads oddly, but is much more correct. Having no בַּ (bet, “in”), what does Exodus 20:11 really mean?

WITHOUT BET; ASAH AS “WORK;” 20:11 SUMMARIZES STAGE TWO

Having no בַּ (bet, “in”), Exodus 20:11 begins, כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ (ki shēshet-yāmîm), “for six days,” as in Young’s Literal Translation. Having no בַּ (bet, “in”), Exodus 20:11 summarizes what God worked on “for six days.”

Which sense of עָשָׂה (‘āsâh, “to make, do, prepare, set up, create, deal, effect, bring about, obtain, complete, execute, to commit, perform work, service; deal with, act, inflect, serve”¹²⁰⁹) fits the context of Exodus 20:11—creation *ex nihilo*, or “perform work?” In the fourth commandment (Exod. 20:8–11), Moses argued from the greater to the lesser. Because God worked six days and rested the seventh, Israel was to “labor and do all your work” six days, then rest the Sabbath. In the context of working six days, the sense of עָשָׂה (‘āsâh) was “perform work.”¹²¹⁰

¹²⁰⁷ An attempt has been made to substitute Matthew 19:4 and Mark 10:6 as the foundation. Jesus alluded to the creation of male and female from the beginning as the warrant against divorce. The young earth creationism theory has taken this as the “beginning of creation” of the universe, so no time could have passed before day one. But in the Greek, “beginning of creation” is immediately followed by “male and female.” This creation must be either of male and female humans or of the universe. The context is about male and female humans, not the universe. The warrant for not divorcing is that from the beginning of the creation of humans (rather than of the universe) God made them male and female. If Jesus were speaking of the beginning of the universe, which according to the young earth creationism theory was on day one, and they say creation was all within the six days and humans were created at the “beginning of creation,” then humans would have to have been created on day one at the beginning of the six-day creation, not on day six, at the end of the six-day creation. In fact, Jesus’ statement against divorce was not about the universe so does not date the creation of the universe.

¹²⁰⁸ Bernard Northrup, *Recognizing Messiah in the Psalms* (Fairfax, VA: Xulon Press, 2003), 94. Northrup renders 20:11, “[It is] because six days the Eternal Lord worked upon the heavens. . . .”

¹²⁰⁹ E. Carpenter, “Asah,” W. VanGemeren, Ed., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 3, #6913, 546–552.

¹²¹⁰ Carpenter, “Asah,” 546.

Which sense was intended for each object of God’s work in Exodus 20:11—
 שָׁמַיִם (ha *shāmayim*, “heaven, heavens, sky, abode of stars”), אֶרֶץ (ha *’āretz* from *’eretz*
 or *’erets*; “earth, land”), and יָם (ha *yām*, “the sea”)? Young earth creationists assume
 Exodus 20:11 included the initial creation in Genesis 1:1. So they claim that the heavens was
 space and that the earth was unformed matter throughout space, both of which would have
 been created *in* six days. But these senses of heavens and earth would have been unlikely for
 Moses to have used. “In the beginning God created the space and the unformed matter”
 would have made no sense to Moses or any other Israelite.

Equally telling against the YEC interpretation is the grammatical evidence that the
 beginning of Genesis 1:1 took place before God’s command for light beginning day one in
 1:3. After the creation in 1:1, the next sequential event is God’s command for light in
 Genesis 1:3. Genesis 1:3 begins with a *vav* consecutive. A *vav* consecutive introduces the
 next event. Genesis 1:3 was the next event. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר (vayōmer
 Elōhîm y^ehî ôr vay^ehî ôr). “And said Elohim, ‘Be light!’ And was
 light.” Light in 1:3 by definition began the daylight portion of day one. Then came “evening
 and morning” in 1:5, framing the nighttime portion of day one for a full daylight-evening-
 nighttime-morning cycle day. So the creation in 1:1 occurred before day one. Since “the
 beginning” came before the six days, then “the beginning” was stage one of creation. The six
 days made up stage two of the creation. Since Exodus 20:11 summarizes the six days, then
 20:11 describes only stage two of creation. Exodus 20:11 does not force the stage one
 creation of Genesis 1:1 into the six days of stage two.

Since the heavens and planet earth were created in Genesis 1:1 before the six days,
 but Exodus 20:11 is about the six days, then the sense of each term in 20:11 was its sense
 during the six days *after* Genesis 1:1. In Genesis 1:2 the Spirit was hovering over earth’s
 dark primeval ocean, so יָם (hayām, “the sea”) in 20:11 was “the sea.” Because day and
 night occurred, אֶרֶץ (ha *’āretz*; “the earth, the land”) was our rotating, rough-finished planet
 “earth” and later also the “land,” the same Hebrew word being used for both. God identified
 the sense of שָׁמַיִם (ha *shāmayim*; “heaven, heavens, sky, abode of stars”) in Genesis 1:8
 when He named the רָקִיעַ (rāqîa’, “expanse”) the שָׁמַיִם (*shāmaym*) “sky.” This expanse
 was located between the waters of the primeval ocean beneath and waters above, presumably
 the overcast cloud layer (Job 26:7–9; 38:8, 9).

“Sky” also fits the next two references. The luminaries would rule day and night “in the expanse of the sky” (Gen. 1:14) from the divine Narrator’s perspective just above the sea. Day and night do not occur in outer space but in earth’s atmospheric sky down to the surface of the planet rotating in sunlight. Earth’s sky is where the luminaries would function as time-signs and as lights. Birds fly in the “expanse of the sky” (1:20), that is, in the expanse of the sky’s air. The sky is not just our atmosphere but also the functional presence by light of the luminaries in the sky from the perspectives of the Spirit and Moses. But the sun and galaxies were not in earth’s רָקִיעַ (*raqia*), the stated location of the functions of the luminaries (1:14–18), so they were not created *in* the six days, but rather made to function in relationship to the earth on the fourth day. The three objects of God’s work in 20:11 were sky, earth/land, and sea. Exodus 20:11 may be translated in context and reference to Genesis 1, “For six days Yahweh performed work on the sky and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them.” Exodus 20:11 does not indicate that God created the universe *in* six days but that God performed work for six days, making habitable and inhabited the sky, earth, and sea—stage two of God’s work.

Thus Exodus 20:11 in no way restricts the initial creation to within the six days but rather is a summary of stage two of creation, God’s six workdays.

“THE BEGINNING” WAS THE BEGINNING TIME PERIOD BEFORE THE SIX DAYS

Claiming “in” and עָשָׂה (*‘āsāh*; “do, make”) as “create” in Exodus 20:11, the young earth creationism theory *necessarily* (1) cannot allow time for creation in the beginning before the six days, so בְּרֵאשִׁית (*b^ere’shît*, “in *the* beginning”) was the first instant or at the most a few hours of day one, (2) because all creation had to have been created “*in*” six days, the *sine qua non* of the theory, then, (3) earth had to have been created in day one or three, and (4) the universe in day one or four, making the universe a couple days older than Adam.

Does בְּרֵאשִׁית (*b^ere’shît*, “in *the* beginning”) mean the “beginning instant”? We may respond with four points:

(1) All later uses of רֵאשִׁית (*re’shît*, “beginning, first”) or בְּרֵאשִׁית (*b^ere’shît*, “in *the* beginning”) when referring to time of definable length were of beginning time periods best measured in years—Nimrod’s four-city kingdom-building beginning (Gen. 10:10), Job’s early life before his testing (Job 8:7), and the beginning four years and five months of

Zedekiah’s short eleven-year reign (Jer. 28:1). Consistently תִּשְׁבָּת (re’shît, “beginning, first”) was a beginning time period of years, not an instant or a few hours. During the beginning time period, God stretched out the heavens (Job 9:8; Psa. 104:2; Isa. 42:5; 44:24; 48:13; 51:13; Jer. 10:12, 51:15; Zech. 12:1), founded planet earth (Job 38:4; 38:4–6), hung planet earth on nothing (Job 26:7), birthed the sea (Job 38:8), and swaddled it with thick dark clouds (Job 26:8–9; 38:9) so no light penetrated to earth (Job 9:7; 26:9)—resulting in the dark ocean-covered uninhabitable earth described in Genesis 1:2. Stretching out *necessarily* required time passage. Also, birthing followed by swaddling persuasively indicates time passage. Although *initiated* instantaneously, תִּשְׁבָּת in Genesis 1:1 was a time period of an unstated number of years, not an instant or a few hours beginning day one as claimed by the young earth creationism theory. A period of years could not fit into literal day one. The beginning was a time period before day one.

(2) Genesis 1:1–2 precedes 1:3 both in the canonical text, grammatically, and logically (the earth needed to have been already created before light penetrated to its dark sea surface). So the act of *ex nihilo* creation took place before God commanded light to earth’s dark sea surface. Light initiated the first day, because each day began with, “And God said, ‘Let. . . .’ ” Day one began in 1:3 with, “And God said, ‘Let there be light.’ ”¹²¹¹ Creation *ex nihilo* could not have taken place “in” the six days but rather before the first day, disallowing the *sine qua non* first claim of the young earth creationism theory sequence.

(3) God divided the light from the darkness, naming them “day” and “night.” A day-night cycle requires a *planet rotating in light* from one side, so *planet* earth, not amorphous matter, was present on day one. Yet Genesis 1:3–5 says nothing about our planet being created *in* day one. God created planet earth in Genesis 1:1 and described it as uninhabitable and uninhabited in 1:2, all *before* day one began with daylight followed by evening, night,

¹²¹¹ Lately, apparently in order to force Genesis 1:1–2 into a supposed night as the first half of day one before the daylight, a young earth creationism advocate has claimed, “The text clearly suggests that Day 1 began with ‘In the beginning’ and following that first evening of darkness (v.2) was the first morning, when God said, ‘Let there be light’ (v.3)” (DeRemer, “Young Biosphere,” 55). But DeRemer’s night-day cycle is untenable because each day’s events ended with the *vav* consecutive evening and morning clause, literally, “Then was evening, then was morning, day #.” Evening and next morning with night between was at day’s end. For 1:1-2 to have been included in day one, day one would have had to have been a night-day-night cycle, but God initiated day one in 1:3 with light as “day,” not darkness, as a day-night cycle (see also Num. 9:15; the day was ended by evening then morning). God’s day of rest began *after* the evening and morning delimiting the night of the sixth day. Only later was the Jewish form of the Sabbath established, beginning Shabbat at sunset. Even *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 475, recognizes a day as “daytime and the night following”

and morning in 1:3–5.

(4) If planet earth was created in 1:1, so were the heavens. Since Genesis 1:2 identified only planet earth as unfinished, we may infer that the heavens were more or less finished and so had the normal definition Moses used—sun, moon, and stars in the sky (Deut. 4:19). God created the sun, moon, stars, and unfinished planet earth in the beginning, before day one.

IS ANY THEORY CONSISTENT WITH BIBLE CREATION TEXTS?

We asked if the Genesis 1 text indicates whether the six days were daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle days or geological eras. The text evidence supports the intent of each יום (*yôm*) in Genesis 1 as a daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle day.

We asked if the Genesis 1 text indicates that God created the stated life kinds once, by the eight command units and six day-night-cycle workdays (only in 1:3–31), or twice, first in the beginning (1:1–2) and then again in the six days (1:3–31). We found not only that no explicit text *supports* but that grammatical evidence *opposes* creation of the stated kinds of life in 1:1–2. God created the stated life kinds only once—by the eight command units involving the six days.

We asked if God created unformed chaos. The text does not support the creation of dark, unformed, chaotic heavens. Only rough-finished planet earth was declared תִּבְהוּ וְחָשׁוּ (*tohu vbohu*, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”). Only earth’s clouded ocean surface was declared dark. But $\text{וְחָשׁוּ וְתִבְהוּ}$ (*tohu vbohu*) indicates “uninhabitable” and “uninhabited” or “empty” of life, not chaos.

We asked if God created the heavens and earth in the beginning before the six days or *in* the six days. It seems that a faulty reading of Exodus 20:11 led to inserting the creation of Genesis 1:1 *in* the six days. Exodus 20:11 actually describes stage two, when God worked for six days making our sky, earth, and sea lighted, habitable, and full of life. Taking Genesis 1:1–3 literally, we see that God created the universe and unfinished planet in the beginning, before light began day one.

The two-stage theory posits that (1) in the beginning (before day one) God created the orderly heavens and unfinished earth; (2) then by eight command units involving six day-

night-cycle workdays He made earth habitable and created life. The two-stage Biblical creation theory seems most consistent with creation texts.

The two-stage theory is compatible with the most Biblically supported claims of the other theories and is a refinement of the traditional unformed-unfilled, day-night-cycle-days, creation theory.¹²¹² If this refinement is accurate, we pray that in the hermeneutical spiral we may be approaching closer to what God said He did in the creation.

¹²¹² “A straightforward reading of the flow of thought in Genesis 1:1–3 has led the majority of Christian and Jewish interpreters in the history of interpretation to this position, hence this is called the traditional view.” “This interpretation has two variations. Some see all of verses 1 and 2 as part of the first day of the seven-day Creation week [young earth creation].” “Others see verses 1–2 as a chronological unity separated by...time from the first day of Creation described in verse 3 [gap theory; two-stage Biblical creation]” (R. M. Davidson, “In the Beginning: How to Interpret Genesis 1,” *Dialogue*, http://dialogue.adventist.org/articles/06_3_davidson_e.htm).

**PART FOUR—
A COMBINED CREATION THEORY**

All ten creation theories contributed their Biblical insights. A synthesis of carefully distinguished truth claims is a worthy goal. We may now put all those thoughtful Biblically-supported claims into a single unified theory.

CHAPTER 8

TWO-STAGE BIBLICAL CREATION FROM THE TEN THEORIES

Let us put the puzzle together. All of the ten theories have major claims supported by the Bible texts (as well as other claims that do not fit the Bible texts). Can the most Biblically supported claims of the ten theories be put together into a proposed combined, composite, or unified eleventh theory?

Let me make it very clear that I will be quoting from the other ten theories, but I will *not be granting my 100% approval* to every detail in their quotes. And I am certainly not agreeing to parts of their theories that I do not quote. What I am doing is showing that they have developed *approximately* the same ideas from the Bible texts that I have in my nuanced form of two-stage Biblical creation.

PREUNDERSTANDINGS FROM THE TEN THEORIES

(00) *Have no unexamined assumptions.* This is John Sailhamer’s pre-understanding. We do well to examine all pre-understandings and change our pre-understandings according to evidence, particularly Scripture evidence, but also considering other evidence such as archeology. A good example of this is if someone had the pre-understanding of the JEDP source criticism theory on one hand or, on the other hand, believed God dictated Genesis to Moses. Wiseman challenges both pre-understandings. He claims that Genesis 1:1—2:4a came from an ancient pre-Mosaic tablet source that originated from an even more ancient oral source. He says, “The Jews had an early tradition of these truths being revealed to both Adam and Enoch.” His claim is that the Genesis 1:1—2:4a narrative was first an oral narrative but was later written on a tablet, which, along with ten other tablets, each ending in the *tôlê dôt* colophon (except the last narrative, the Joseph narrative, which was probably on a papyrus scroll), were received and enscriptured by Moses in the wilderness.¹²¹³ This ancient tablet and papyrus source of Genesis was a new idea to me when I read Wiseman, but I intend to research if further and consider its evidence. We need not agree with all the details of Wiseman’s theory to consider the possibility of ancient source tablets.

¹²¹³ Wiseman, *Revealed*.

(0) *Recognize that we can be wrong.* John Sailhamer believes in a spirit of “congenial discovery.”¹²¹⁴ I desire to follow his example.

HERMENEUTICAL PRACTICES FROM THE TEN THEORIES

(Hermeneutical Practice 1) *Interpret the Bible evidence. Interpret the scientific evidence. Both, when correctly interpreted, will agree.* Hugh Ross is highly evidential. He claims that both the Bible and creation have proven to a very high degree of probability to be reliable and from the Creator, so both, when rightly interpreted, will agree. The Bible came from the Creator because only the Creator could have known before modern science the Biblical claims that correlate precisely with modern discoveries in astronomy, astrophysics, cosmology, etc. The universe came from the Creator, because it has been precisely tuned for human life. “If the matter and energy are finite in extent and in time [that is, the universe had a beginning], and if the ranges of the parameters for life are narrow [that is, the universe is extremely finely tuned for human life on earth], we have potent evidence for a personal Creator, specifically for the God of the Bible.”¹²¹⁵ So the Bible, when correctly interpreted, and the creation, when correctly interpreted, will in the end agree. I find myself agreeing with this hermeneutical point, even if I do not agree with all of Ross’s conclusions.

Arthur Custance adds the idea that Scripture exegesis and science should remain largely independent; and then in the end, both, when correctly interpreted, will ultimately agree.¹²¹⁶ This independence is an important caveat. One should not interpret the Bible on the basis of a current science theory. Both Scripture exegesis and science should be pursued largely independently until they are compared.

(Hermeneutical Practice 2) *View the text from the perspective of the writer and original readers.* John Sailhamer says, “It was only natural to view the Biblical text with the narrow limits of what was known about the world.” It makes sense to interpret the text as best we can from the knowledge and perspective of the original author and intended audience.

¹²¹⁴ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 17.

¹²¹⁵ *Ibid.* 4.

¹²¹⁶ Custance, *Void*, 3.

TEN CLAIMS OF TWO-STAGE BIBLICAL CREATION FROM THE TEN THEORIES

All these claims are found in one or more of the original ten theories. They are not independent claims of the two-stage Biblical creation theory. I have gathered Biblically substantiated claims from those who have exegeted the text before us. Thus, we enter the hermeneutical spiral together.

(1) *B^ERE'SHÎT* WAS THE BEGINNING TIME PERIOD OF UNSTATED LENGTH

Hebrew scholar John Sailhamer correctly explains that תִּי בְרֵשִׁית (*b^erē'shîṭ*, “in the beginning”) indicates an initial, instantaneously begun period of time of unstated length. “The Hebrew word *reshit*, which is the term for ‘beginning’ used in this chapter [Genesis 1], has a very specific sense in Scripture. In the Bible the term always refers to an extended, yet indeterminate duration of time—not a specific moment. It is a block of time which precedes an extended series of time periods.” “The term [*b^erē'shîṭ*] does not refer to a point in time but to a *period* or *duration* of time which falls before a series of events.” It has a “starting point” and a “specific duration.”¹²¹⁷ “Within the Book of Genesis itself, the author uses the term *reshit* to refer to the early part of Nimrod’s kingdom (Genesis 10:10).” “And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar” (NASB). Later other cities were built, but these four were the beginning extent and years of his kingdom. “In Job 8:7 the word *reshit* refers to the early part of Job’s life, before his misfortunes overtook him.” “It was an unspecified, but lengthy, period in Job’s life.” So Job’s תִּי בְרֵשִׁית (*rē'shîṭ*; first, beginning, best, chief, firstfruits), his beginning years before his testing, was compared to his future life after his testing, a life that continued 140 years (Job 8:7; 42:16).

With the prefix בְּ (*bet*, “in”), תִּי בְרֵשִׁית (*b^erē'shîṭ*) occurs four times after Genesis 1:1, all in Jeremiah concerning events during the beginning periods of the reigns of Judah’s last kings. “According to Jeremiah 28:1, for example, the ‘beginning’ [*rē'shîṭ*] of King Zedekiah’s reign included events which happened four years after he had assumed the

¹²¹⁷ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 39. Apparently he means the actual duration is specific, even if the length is indeterminate to the reader of the text. The text does not tell the reader how long the period of time was.

throne.”¹²¹⁸ Jeremiah 28:1 is quite specific: “Now in the same year, in the beginning [בְּרֵאשִׁית יָתִי] of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth month.” Zedekiah’s “beginning” period extended over a third of his eleven-year reign.

“Since the Hebrew word ‘*beginning*’ refers to an indefinite period of time, we cannot say for certain when God created the world or how long He took to create it.”¹²¹⁹ “The term *beginning* in Biblical Hebrew marks a starting point of a specific duration, as in ‘the beginning of the year’ (Deut. 11:12). In opening the account of Creation with the phrase ‘in the beginning,’ the author has marked Creation as the starting point of a period of time.”¹²²⁰ “God created the universe during an indeterminate period of time” followed by “a single, seven day week, which itself was followed by a vast history of humanity leading ultimately to Abraham and the people of Israel.”¹²²¹ “Other Hebrew words were available to the author.” Sailhamer explains,

The author could have used a Hebrew word for “beginning” similar to the English word “start” or “initial point” (for example, *rishonah* or *techillah*). Had he used one of those words, we would have to translate Genesis 1:1 something like this: “The first thing God did was to create the universe.” Using such a term would have *required* that the universe be created in the first moment of time.¹²²²

Only the English word “beginning,” not the Hebrew word בְּרֵאשִׁית יָתִי (*b^erēshît*, “in the beginning,” with the prefixed particle preposition added to רֵאשִׁית *rēshît*, “first, beginning”), allows the erroneous interpretation that God created the whole universe in an instant, including trees “with growth rings showing years of growth” and homing pigeons “returning to homes they had, in fact, never been to.”¹²²³

Sailhamer gives another reason why the “beginning” indicates a period of time. The Bible frequently pairs the “beginning” “with its antonym ‘end.’”¹²²⁴ The “end” refers to the “end times,” a period of time at least including the Tribulation and Millennium, and some add the present church era. The end will be a reversal of the beginning. The beginning

¹²¹⁸ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 38-39.

¹²¹⁹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 14.

¹²²⁰ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 84.

¹²²¹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 40.

¹²²² Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 41.

¹²²³ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 41.

¹²²⁴ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 82.

proceeded from good to evil; the end will proceed from evil to good. Since the “end” will be a period of time, so was the “beginning.”

How long was “the beginning?” “There is no way to limit the duration of the word ‘beginning’ (Hebrew, *reshit*). It could refer to billions of years, to a few thousand years, or to a period as brief as a few months or days. The length of time of this ‘beginning’ is precisely what is left unspecified by the term. The whole point of using *reshit* to convey the concept of ‘beginning’ (when other terms were readily available) is to leave the duration of time unspecified.”¹²²⁵ תִּשְׁאֵרָא (b^erē’shît, “in the beginning”) God created the heavens and the earth. The initiation of תִּשְׁאֵרָא (b^erē’shît) was instantaneous, but the Bible does not tell us how long “the beginning” lasted. The qal perfect aspect of the verb אֵרָא (bārā’, “create”) does not indicate the action’s length of time and certainly does not require an instantaneous act, simply that the writer envisioned the action’s conclusion.¹²²⁶ This extent of time is *not* an artificially inserted “gap” of time (as in the gap theory) but is *inherent* in the usage of תִּשְׁאֵרָא, which consistently means a time period. John Sailhamer, like me, believes in a beginning time period unspecified in length by the Bible, so an undated earth creation (UEC).

So, in Genesis 1:1 תִּשְׁאֵרָא (b^erē’shît) began time instantaneously and extended as an unspecified time period concluded by the description in Genesis 1:2 and God’s command beginning day one on planet earth.¹²²⁷

Other texts also indicate that the beginning was a length of time. They explain why planet earth was a water-covered cloud-darkened planet by the time of Genesis 1:2. Job 26:7–9 states:

He stretches out the north over empty space,
And hangs the earth on nothing.
He wraps up the waters in His clouds;
And the cloud does not burst under them.
He obscures the face of the full moon,¹²²⁸
And spreads His cloud over it.

After the initial creation, God stretched out space, hung planet earth on nothing, and covered the sea with cloud so thick it obscured even the full moon. Later, God questioned Job in 38:4, and 7–9:

¹²²⁵ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 28-29.

¹²²⁶ Gary D Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 129.

¹²²⁷ John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound* (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Books, 1996), 38.

¹²²⁸ The Hebrew consonants may be translated “throne” or “moon.” Context supports the latter.

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? . . .
 When the morning stars sang together,
 And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
 Or who enclosed the sea with doors [birth motif],
 When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb;
 When I made a cloud its garment,
 And thick darkness its swaddling band.

God made earth's foundational core in the presence of the stars. Then God birthed the sea and wrapped it in thick cloud as if in swaddling clothes, thus blackening earth's dark sea.

In Psalm 104 David declared, "Covering Thysself with light as with a cloak, Stretching out heaven like a *tent* curtain" (v. 2). He continued, "He established the earth upon its foundations" (v. 5, NASB). David declared that after covering Himself in light, God stretched out or expanded the heavens or universe, even before He formed planet earth's foundations—presumably, in modern terms, earth's core and mantle. Eleven texts report that God has been stretching out or expanded the universe from its creation even into the lifetime of the prophets.¹²²⁹

Nehemiah 9:6 gives an order to the events that would seem to be in temporal sequence: God made the heavens as orderly hosts (perhaps indicating constellations, which include galaxies), earth, seas, and life.

You have made the heavens,
 The heaven of heavens with all their host,
 The earth and all that is on it,
 The seas and all that is in them.
 You give life to all of them.

Putting these texts together, we understand that God covered Himself in light; stretched out empty space, expanding the very space of the universe; put the stars in orderly array; formed planet earth's foundational core in the presence of the stars; and hung the planet on nothing. God birthed earth's sea and wrapped the sea in thick dark cloud that blocked out the light of even the full moon, which He had made by then. These events resulted in the conditions in Genesis 1:2—a rough-finished planet, but still uninhabitable

¹²²⁹ Job 9:8; Psa. 104:2; Isa. 40:22, 42:5, 44:24, 45:12, 48:13, 51:13; Jer. 10:12, 51:15; Zech. 12:1

because it was sea-covered and cloud-blackened. Stretching out, birthing, and wrapping all take time. “The beginning” was a time period.

So ית □אָרָבֵּי (b^erē'shît, “in the beginning”) God instantly initiated time with the beginning of the universe. The beginning continued an unspecified finite time during which God completed formative events, making the orderly universe and unfinished planet earth.

(2) BĀRĀ' IN 1:1 WAS UNIQUELY *EX NIHILO* CREATION OF UNIVERSE

Sailhamer explains, “In the first act, God created the universe we see around us today, consisting of the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars. . . . The biblical record of that act of creation is recounted in Genesis 1:1—‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.’”¹²³⁰

Gerald Schroeder explains, “The creation of the heavens and the earth from absolute nothing is at the root of biblical faith.” As a Hebrew speaker, Schroeder explains that אָרָבֵּי (bārā', create) is the only Hebrew word that can specifically indicate “creation of something from nothing.”¹²³¹ Although he would not use the New Testament, we know that Hebrews 11:3 confirms this *ex nihilo* aspect of the initial creation in Genesis 1:1.

Sailhamer states that of the four interpretations of Genesis 1:1, the view that the text very strongly supports is the traditional interpretation, that Genesis 1:1 is an independent clause declaring the *ex nihilo* creation of all things.¹²³² “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

The initial creation *ex nihilo* of the entire heavens and unfinished earth was different from the six days' work using already created materials to finish earth and fill it with life. G. H. Pember says, “The work of those [six] days was . . . quite a different thing from the original creation.” By the bārā' creation in Genesis 1:1 we understand that “the Universe is not eternal and self-existent, but was originally created by the power of the Almighty.”¹²³³ “Asah is generally used in connection with them [the work of the six days].” “Now asah

¹²³⁰ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 14.

¹²³¹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 62.

¹²³² Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Genesis, 1-15* (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 13; Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 11-14; John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 62, footnote 2.

¹²³³ William Buckland, *Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology*, Vol. 1, Chapter 2, 1836; Volume VI in *The Bridgewater Treatises*; in Custance, *Void*, 27.

signifies to make, fashion, or prepare out of existing material; as for instance, to build a ship, erect a house, or prepare a meal.” Pember discusses the two $\aleph \square \gamma \beth$ (*bārā'*, “create”) acts in the six days. “God is said to have created the inhabitants of the waters and the fowls of heaven.” This was the first introduction of animal life in which, unlike plants, God $\aleph \square \gamma \beth$ (*bārā'*, “create”) a “life force.” “Just in the same way man is said to have been created, though in the second chapter we are expressly told that his body was formed from dust (Gen. I:27; ii:7).”¹²³⁴ The verb in 2:7, “*yatzar*, which means to shape,” indicates that God shaped Adam’s body from already existing materials, yet God also $\aleph \square \gamma \beth$ (*bārā'*, “create”) man in His image as a living soul. So there is a difference between the initial *ex nihilo* $\aleph \square \gamma \beth$ (*bârâ'*, “create”) creation of the heavens and earth out of nothing, along with the two special works of creation using the word $\aleph \square \gamma \beth$ (*bârâ'*, “create”) on days five and six; and the forming works during the six days indicated by $\eta \square \psi \nu$ (*'āsâh*, “do, make”).

Without any pre-existing time, space, matter, energy, or physical laws, eternal God the Father through eternal God the Son (Heb. 1:2, 10) by His sovereign word $\aleph \square \gamma \beth$ (*bārā'*, “created”) *ex nihilo* (“out of nothing,” Heb. 11:3) all space-time-matter-energy-laws. This *ex nihilo* creation of the entire universe in the beginning was a unique event that occurred only once—in Genesis 1:1.

(3) GOD CREATED HEAVENS AND EARTH BEFORE SIX WORKDAYS

God created the heavens and the earth “in the beginning” before light began day one. This would seem to be the most literal, contextual, grammatical reading of Genesis 1:1–3. As previously explained, the young earth scientific creationism, or 6,000-year-old-universe, theory claims that the events of Genesis 1:1 occurred *in* day one; this is their foundational claim on which their entire theory stands or falls. The two-stage Biblical creation theory claims that God created the heavens and unfinished planet earth “in the beginning” *before* God’s six workdays finishing planet earth for humans.

Pember correctly states, “We are told [by Genesis 1:1] that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; but the Scriptures never affirm that He did this in the six days.”¹²³⁵ The plain reading of Genesis 1 is that $\eta \square \psi \nu \aleph \gamma \beth$ (*b^erē'shût*, “in the beginning”)

¹²³⁴ Pember, *Ages*, 29.

¹²³⁵ Pember, *Ages*, 29.

was before the six days.

A number of creation authors in this study have produced cogent arguments supporting the order of the creation of the heavens and earth *before* the six days. First, the perfect aspect of אֲבָרָא (bārā') in 1:1 indicates that the writer envisioned the conclusion of the action.¹²³⁶ Syntactically, the conclusion of the action of אֲבָרָא (bārā') in 1:1 was fixed at 1:2 by the vav disjunctive-prefixed וְעַתָּה (v^ehā'āretz, “now the earth”) circumstantial clause indicating “the completion of one episode.”¹²³⁷ In other words, the first episode is, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” That first episode ends as Genesis 1:2 describes the conditions of planet earth as uninhabitable and uninhabited, and its water-covered surface darkened. Genesis 1:3—2:3 is the second episode of God’s six days’ work making planet earth lighted, habitable, and inhabited. This second episode ends in the seventh day of rest and the *tôl^edôt* of Genesis 2:4a. So the first narrative episode in Genesis 1:1–2 of the initial creation, ending in the description of earth’s condition, took place *before* the second narrative episode in 1:3—2:3, involving six days finishing planet earth and ending in the seventh day of rest.

Second, since “heavens and earth” in 1:1 is a merism inclusive of the whole creation, but in 1:2 only planet earth was singled out as unfinished and dark, we may deduce that the universe, in contrast, was more or less completed and lighted in 1:1, before day one began on planet earth in 1:3. Genesis 1:3 begins with a *vav/waw* consecutive¹²³⁸ prefix followed by the imperfect verb.¹²³⁹ “The imperfect [verb prefixed] with *waw* consecutive serves to express actions, events, or states, which are to be regarded as the temporal or logical sequel of the actions, events or states mentioned immediately before.”¹²⁴⁰ Genesis 1:3a is correctly rendered, “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’ ” (NASB). God’s command for light was the logical sequel to the previous description in 1:2 of the unfinished darkened earth and the temporal sequel to the previous action, God’s creation of the heavens and the earth in the

¹²³⁶ Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 139. “The Hebrew perfect does not have tense (time of action) apart from context and issues of syntax.”

¹²³⁷ Waltke, *Hebrew Syntax*, 164.

¹²³⁸ Or “relative,” see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 129.

¹²³⁹ Technically a *wayyiqtol* verb form, for example in Gen. 2:7 discussed in Jack Collins, “Discourse Analysis,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 61:2 (Fall 1999), 273.

¹²⁴⁰ E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 326; J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1959), 90, 91; Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 252.

beginning in 1:1. The creation of the heavens and earth occurred before the six days.

Third, John Sailhamer explains that young earth creationists incorrectly assume “that the ‘beginning’ of creation (Genesis 1:1) occurred in the first day of the week.”¹²⁴¹ However, day one was initiated (as were all the days) by God’s command, יָרַחֵ (y^ehî, jussive “let be”), “Let there be light,” which literally began day one. Genesis 1:1–2 was completed before the daylight-initiating command in 1:3 began day one. Then day one ended in evening and morning, which indicates the nighttime part of day one. Day one was a full daylight-evening-nighttime-morning cycle day, which God called “day” and “night”—listed in that order—ending in evening, nighttime, then morning.¹²⁴² Since day one began with daylight in 1:3, not in 1:1, the initial creation in 1:1 took place before the first day in 1:3. The initial creation occurred not *in* day one, resulting in the claim of a 6,000-year-old universe by the young earth creationism group, but occurred before day one.

Fourth, structurally, day one was the first in a sequence of six days, all following roughly the same formula. That formula begins with, “And God said.” Gap theory advocate John Harris explains:

Now, that the originating act, described in the first verse, was not meant to be included in the account of the six Adamic days, is evident from the following considerations: first, the creation of the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth days begins with the formula, “And God said.” It is only natural, therefore, to conclude that the creation of the first day begins with the third verse where the said formula first occurs, “And God said, ‘let there be light.’” But if so, it follows that the act described in the first verse, and the state of the earth spoken of in the second verse, must both have belonged to a period anterior to the first day.¹²⁴³

Since day one, like all six days, began with, “And God said,” then day one began in 1:3, not in 1:1. So the initial creation in 1:1 took place before day one began in 1:3.

Fifth, Meredith Kline explains, “Proverbs 8:22–31 defines ‘the beginning’ of Genesis 1:1 as the time prior to the progressive fashioning of the world described in the subsequent six days of creation.” Proverbs 8 says, “The Lord possessed me [personified Wisdom] at the

¹²⁴¹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 31.

¹²⁴² Day one was not a night of Gen. 1:1-2 then day cycle, because after the daylight, day one ended with two *vav* consecutive clauses delimiting the nighttime, “and (*vav* consecutive) was evening, and was morning, day one.” All six days were day-night cycles.

¹²⁴³ John Harris, *The Pre-Adamite Earth* (London: Ward & Co., ca. 1849, republished G. S. Blanchard, 1860), 354; in Custance, *Void*, 27.

beginning . . . from the antiquity of the world; When no ocean-deeps. . . .” “Proverbs 8:22-30 provides an inspired commentary on Genesis 1:1.” “According to that inspired commentary, ‘in the beginning’ cannot be a general time-reference to the entire six-day creation period, for Wisdom explicitly placed the events of the six days *after* ‘the beginning.’”¹²⁴⁴ Since “the antiquity of the world” was before “When no ocean deeps,” which was the condition of planet earth from *before* Genesis 1:2, but day one did not begin until God commanded light in Genesis 1:3, then the beginning was before the six days.

Sixth, Psalm 104:5–6 also explains that God made planet earth before the ocean waters described in Genesis 1:2 and, therefore, necessarily before day one began in Genesis 1:3. Ross explains, “Psalm 104:5–6 also describes primordial Earth’s surface as covered entirely with water.”

He [God] set the earth on its foundation;
it [foundation] can never be moved.
You [God] covered it [earth] with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.

“This text implies that God established the planet’s core, mantle, and crust before cloaking Earth in oceans.”¹²⁴⁵ If God made planet earth before covering it with water, and earth was covered with water in Genesis 1:2, then God made the earth before daylight began day one in Genesis 1:3.

Other texts agree. In Job 38:4–12 God questioned Job. Since the questions began with founding earth in the presence of the stars and ended with animal life, we may infer temporal order. While God was founding planet earth with precision, stars (interpreting stars literally) were already present. Next God birthed the sea, all necessarily before Genesis 1:2 when the sea was present, so necessarily before day one.¹²⁴⁶ Both Nehemiah 9:6 and Psalm 146:6 declare that God is the Maker of the heavens, earth, and sea, listed in that order—at least implying that the heavens and earth were created before the ocean-covered earth in 1:2, so necessarily before day one. According to Job 26:7–10, God suspended earth on nothing and

¹²⁴⁴ Kline, “Framework,” 244.

¹²⁴⁵ Ross, *Origins*, 39-40.

¹²⁴⁶ פָּרָץ (‘āretz, earth, land) in Job 38:4 cannot refer to God making land by gathering the sea (Gen. 1:9-10) as Waltke suggests, because in Job 38 פָּרָץ was before the sea was even birthed. פָּרָץ was our planet. Bruce Waltke, “The Creation Account,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:526, 144.

wrapped the waters in cloud, which obscured “the face of the full moon” (NIV), all before God formed a horizon of light on the surface of the ocean waters, apparently a description of day one. So the moon and earth with its sea were present before day one’s light. According to Proverbs 8:27, God established the heavens in place before He marked out a circle or horizon on the face of the deep beginning day one.

The opposite view, that God created the heavens and earth *in* day one, is based on an “*in*” that is not in the Hebrew of Exodus 20:11.

So we may conclude with certainty that God created the heavens and earth before the six days.

(3a) THE UNIVERSE IS UNDATED BY THE BIBLE.

Meredith Kline claims, “The inspired text, rightly interpreted, is simply silent with regard to the age of the earth and universe.”¹²⁴⁷

If the universe was created during a beginning time period before the six days, then the universe is undated by the Bible. The only reason to date the universe is the incorrect claim that the universe was created *in* the six days, only a few days before Adam, who is dated approximately by the genealogies. But the universe was created an unstated amount of time before the six days, not in the six days. Adam’s descendants’ genealogies roughly date Adam, not the universe. So the universe is however old it is. The two-stage theory insists on a Biblically *undated* heavens and earth creation (UEC). Even Duncan, who claims twenty-four-hour days and is in close agreement with the young earth creation camp on other points, agrees that the universe is undated by the Bible. “We take no position on the age of the universe precisely because that question is not directly addressed by the canon.”¹²⁴⁸ He is correct.

Young earth creationists (YEC) advocate a roughly 6,000 to 10,000-year-old young earth creation. Hugh Ross advocates an old earth/universe creation (OEC). The two-stage Biblical creation theory believes in a Biblically undated universe and earth creation (UEC).

God created the orderly heavens and rough-finished planet earth during the time period of the beginning, an unstated length *before* the six days. So the Bible does not date the

¹²⁴⁷ Kline, “Framework,” 248.

¹²⁴⁸ Duncan, “24-Hour View,” in *Genesis*, 22.

universe.

(4) GENESIS 1:2 WAS EARTH DESCRIPTION, NOT CATASTROPHIC EARTH EVENT

Bruce Waltke correctly claims that “the restitution theory of cosmogony, which contends that the chaos of Genesis 1:2 occurred [supposedly from Satan’s fall and judgment] after God had created the originally perfect universe” is grammatically and philologically essentially impossible.¹²⁴⁹

Planet earth is described in Genesis 1:2 as תִּהְיֶה חֹשֶׁךְ וְרֵיבֹחַ אֲדָמָה (tōhû v^ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) and its sea surface dark.

But the gap, re-constitution, ruin-restitution, or re-creation theory claims that 1:2 was an event. They claim that during a proposed gap of time between 1:1 and 1:2, life developed, lived, and died by the trillions, leaving the fossil record. They claim that this first creation of life ended when earth “became” or “had become” “without form and void,”¹²⁵⁰ an event attributed to the violent fall of Satan or his judgment by God.¹²⁵¹ The fossil record remained. Later, in six days, God re-constituted earth and re-created life *de novo*. According to this theory, there would be no biological connection between sharks, ginkgo trees, horseshoe crabs, etc., in the fossil record from before the six days and sharks, ginkgo trees, horseshoe crabs, etc., now after the six days.

However, the gap theory has fallen into disrepute because it is grammatically unsound.¹²⁵² Grammatically, Genesis 1:2 begins with a *vav/waw* disjunctive prefixed noun, וְעַתָּה אֲדָמָה (v^ehā’āretz, “now the earth”), forming a circumstantial clause modifying earth. Genesis 1:2 describes the unfinished conditions on planet earth from its creation in 1:1 and anticipates God’s finishing work in 1:3–31.¹²⁵³ Therefore, וְעַתָּה אֲדָמָה (v^ehā’āretz, “now the earth”) “does not introduce an independent sequential clause,”¹²⁵⁴ the faulty translation

¹²⁴⁹ Bruce K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3, Part II” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132:526 (April 1975), 136.

¹²⁵⁰ Arthur Custance, *Without Form and Void*, Brockville, Can.: self-published, 43.

¹²⁵¹ Mark F. Rooker, “Genesis 1:1-3: Creation or Re-Creation?” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149, 1992, 316-323, 411-427.

¹²⁵² Weston W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled: A Critique of the Gap Theory of Genesis 1:1, 2* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1973).

¹²⁵³ Ronald J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax* (University of Toronto Press, 1988), 70.

¹²⁵⁴ Waltke, “Genesis 1:1-3,” 140.

“And the earth had become without form and void”¹²⁵⁵ claimed by gap theory advocate Arthur Custance. Custance’s theory is so improbable as to be unworthy of further consideration. James Barr declares, “It would be quite perverse to insist on the meaning ‘become’ here.”¹²⁵⁶ Weston Fields concludes, “The traditional translation of *hay’ta* as ‘was’ is the only legitimate one.”¹²⁵⁷ “Now the earth was” uninhabitable. Genesis 1:2 is not an independent clause of events and time-passage during which earth “became” uninhabited and uninhabitable. Time and events occurred during Genesis 1:1 and again beginning in 1:3. But no time passage or events are indicated at 1:2, the very point the gap theory requires time passage, vast advanced life, and its ruin; thus disallowing the gap theory.

The gap theory argues from silence for two completely independent creations of life and the destruction of that first creation of life at Genesis 1:2. Rooker responds, “Scripture nowhere states that God judged the world when Satan fell.”¹²⁵⁸ Wiseman explains, “The second theory—that of six days *re-creation*—puts forward the idea that there has been two quite distinct creations and that these were separated by an unknown period lasting possibly millions of years.” “The second verse is said to leave room for, or to assume that, a catastrophe came upon the earth affecting the sun and moon, resulting in the earth becoming ‘darkness and waters’, chaos and ruin, involving the destruction of all plant, animal and human life.” From this destruction the fossils formed. “The remaining verses (3-31) are said to refer to the six literal days in which God *re-created* the earth . . . in six ordinary days of twenty-four hours each.”¹²⁵⁹ Wiseman concludes, “Scripture gives us no information whatever about these alleged two quite distinct and complete creations separated from each other by millions of years.”¹²⁶⁰

Genesis 1:2 was a description of planet earth’s unfinished condition from its creation in 1:1, not an event when earth and life “became” ruined, as claimed by the gap theory.

(5) PLANET EARTH ALONE DESCRIBED AS UNINHABITABLE; ITS SEA DARK

¹²⁵⁵ Arthur C. Custance, *Without Form and Void: A Study of the Meaning of Genesis 1:2* (Brookville, Canada: Doorway Papers, 1970).

¹²⁵⁶ James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 59.

¹²⁵⁷ Fields, *Critique*, 112.

¹²⁵⁸ Mark F. Rooker, “Genesis 1:1-3,” 317.

¹²⁵⁹ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 23-24.

¹²⁶⁰ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 26.

Hugh Ross says that Genesis 1:2 shifts the focus from “the heavens and the earth,” the merism in 1:1 of the entire universe, to הָאָרֶץ (*hā'āretz*), planet earth alone. “As the text transitions from verse 1 to verse 2, the focus shifts from the cosmos to the early earth.”¹²⁶¹ “Now earth was *tōhû v^ābōhû*.” Normal parallelism would have carried the merism of the “heavens and earth” from 1:1 into 1:2, but strikingly this is not the case. Since only planet earth was declared empty and dark, we may infer that the universe was neither empty nor dark, but filled with luminaries and lighted since it was created *ex nihilo* in 1:1.

Two theories disagree and take opposite extremes of הָאָרֶץ (*hā'āretz*) in 1:2. On the one hand, the young earth creationism theory over-expands הָאָרֶץ (*hā'āretz*) to all matter in the universe, meaning that all matter was “formless and void” and the whole universe was a watery, dark “matrix.” On the other hand, John Sailhamer’s historical land creationism over-restricts הָאָרֶץ (*hā'āretz*) to the Land of Eden, which would become the Promised Land.¹²⁶²

However, since הָאָרֶץ (*hā'āretz*) is the last word in 1:1 and the first word beginning 1:2, prefixed by a *vav* disjunctive relating it back to 1:1, both occurrences have the same extra-linguistic referent—planet earth. Contra the young earth creationism theory’s claim, since the next event would be day and night, requiring a rotating planet, earth was our rotating planet, not unformed dark watery matter throughout the universe. And since there were two elements in Genesis 1:1, heavens and earth, but only planet earth was described as תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ (*tōhû v^ābōhû*, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”), then, contra the YEC claim, the universe was not declared unformed. Contra Sailhamer’s claim, if הָאָרֶץ (*hā'āretz*) in 1:1 meant our planet, then הָאָרֶץ (*hā'āretz*) beginning 1:2 also meant our planet. Planet earth alone was described as uninhabitable and uninhabited.

The face of הַיָּם הַעֲמֹק (*h^ēhôm*, “deep ocean”) was declared dark, the same הַמַּיִם (*hamāyim*, “the waters”) of the worldwide sea over which the Spirit hovered. Job explains why the face of the deep ocean water was dark. Job 38:8 speaks of יָם (*yām*, “sea”), and then verse 9 explains that the sea was wrapped in עָנָן (*ānān*, “cloud”) and עֲרָפֶל (*arāphel*; “deep darkness, thick dark cloud”). Day one began when sunlight pierced this thinning cloud to the Spirit’s location just above the deep ocean. In a second workday, this unbroken cloud would rise, forming an open-air expanse under the overcast sky. On a fourth

¹²⁶¹ Ross, *Origins*, 37.

¹²⁶² Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 49.

workday the overcast opened to clear sky (Job 26:13a) for the luminaries to govern day and night.

Ross further explains that *tōhû v^ābōhû*, as well as the dark sea-covered condition of our planet, indicates that earth was still “empty of life and unfit for life.”¹²⁶³ This unfinished state would be the object of God’s work during the six days.

Planet earth (not the universe, nor just Eden) was declared uninhabitable and uninhabited and its deep ocean surface dark, implying that the universe was neither empty nor dark.

(6) NEITHER THE UNIVERSE NOR PLANET EARTH WERE CHAOS

Several theories claim pre-creation chaos, initial chaos, or judgment-caused chaos. Hugh Ross says that תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû, “uninhabitable and uninhabited”) does not mean chaos but means earth was unfit for life and empty of life. Jeremiah 4:23 repeats the exact phrase תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) regarding the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem, making the land uninhabitable and uninhabited. In Jeremiah 4:27a Yahweh adds, “I will not destroy it completely.” Palestine did not become formless chaos, only an uninhabited wasteland. Isaiah 34:11 uses both תֹהוּ (tōhû) and בֹהוּ (bōhû) of the slaughter of Edom, making Edom uninhabited. Isaiah 45:18 contrasts תֹהוּ (tōhû, uninhabitable) with לַשֶׁבֶת (lāshevet from yāshav) meaning “habitable.” Deuteronomy 32:10 describes a תֹהוּ (tōhû) uninhabitable wilderness. Therefore, the meaning of תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) in Genesis 1:2 is not formless chaos but uninhabitable and empty of life or uninhabited.

Given the goal of human habitation (Isa. 45:18) and תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (tōhû v^ābōhû) in 1:2 as the problem, the sense is uninhabitable and uninhabited or empty. By the end of God’s work in 1:1, the universe was orderly cosmos, and planet earth was a complete, well-created planet, just not yet habitable for humans. Ross concludes that *tōhû v^ābōhû* means that planet earth was “empty of life and unfit for life.”¹²⁶⁴ In Genesis 1:2, *tōhû v^ābōhû* indicates a “desolate condition of early Earth.”¹²⁶⁵

¹²⁶³ Ross, *Time*, 153.

¹²⁶⁴ Ross, *Time*, 153.

¹²⁶⁵ Ross, *Origins*, 38.

Pember agrees. Pember says that the translation of Genesis 1:2, “the earth was without form, and void,” is “a glaring illustration of the influence of the chaos-legend.”¹²⁶⁶ The meaning of תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (*tōhû v^ābōhû*) is “desolation” and “that which is empty.” “Now these two words are found together only in two other passages.” “In a prophecy of Isaiah, after a fearful description of the fall of Idumea [Edom] in the day of vengeance, we find the expression ‘He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones—or it should be translated, the plummet—of emptiness’ (Isa. Xxxiv. II).” Pember explains, “Now ‘confusion’ and ‘emptiness’ are, in the Hebrew, the same words as those rendered ‘without form, and void.’” In the second passage, Jeremiah describes a similar military “devastation of Judah and Jerusalem.” “We see, therefore, that the Hebrew word *tohu* signifies ‘destruction’ or ‘that which is desolate;’ and *bohû* ‘emptiness’ or ‘that which is empty,’ probably with reference to the absence of all life (‘I beheld, and, lo, there was no man,’ etc.).” So the phrase “And the earth was *tōhû v^ābōhû*” means that planet earth (not the universe) was “desolate” and “empty” “of all life.”¹²⁶⁷ Earth was not unformed chaos.

Sailhamer explains that the Greek Septuagint unhelpfully translated *tōhû v^ābōhû* as “unseen” and “unformed.” “Were it not for the Greek notion of ‘primeval chaos,’ the phrase never would have been translated that way. The sense of the Hebrew phrase suggests something quite different, a sense some early translators identified quite clearly.” The LXX translators improperly biased their rendering of the Hebrew as ὁράτος καὶ κατασκευάστος (“unseen and not properly prepared”) apparently to fit Greek philosophy and mythology, as if Genesis 1:1 had left the earth in chaos.¹²⁶⁸ Later translations followed the LXX. However, the meaning actually is “uninhabitable” and “wilderness” “that had not yet become inhabitable for human beings.”¹²⁶⁹ Sailhamer says that Ibn Ezra (1092–1167) understood the phrase to mean earth was “uninhabited because it was covered with water, not that the earth was formless chaos.”¹²⁷⁰

The young earth creationism theory follows the faulty “formless” translation claiming that “the physical universe” in 1:2 had “no form, no motion, no light.”¹²⁷¹ However, when

¹²⁶⁶ Pember, *Ages*, 31.

¹²⁶⁷ Pember, *Ages*, 31.

¹²⁶⁸ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 61-66.

¹²⁶⁹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 63-64.

¹²⁷⁰ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 196.

¹²⁷¹ Morris, *Record*, 51.

God created the heavens, He made the heavens as a “host” or “orderly army” (Neh. 9:6), not as “chaos.” God formed orderly constellations including galaxies, “He made the Bear and Orion (which includes a galaxy), the Pleiades and the constellations of the south” (Job 9:9). Young correctly concludes that it would be “wise to abandon the term ‘chaos.’ ”

Tsumura summarizes, “There is nothing in this passage [Genesis 1:2] that would suggest a chaotic state of the earth.”¹²⁷²

In Genesis 1:1 God created the heavens as an orderly cosmos and the earth as an orderly planet, though by the time of 1:2 still unfinished for human life. Neither heavens nor earth (although the latter was unfinished) was chaos.

(7) THE SPIRIT’S LOCATION IMPLIES PERSPECTIVE FOR NARRATIVE OF 1:3–31

Ross emphasizes that knowing the reference frame of observation is crucial for correctly interpreting the data. He then explains that the reference frame for the six days was the perspective of the stated divine Observer. That reference frame changes from the universal perspective of Genesis 1:1. “The reference frame also shifts. Genesis 1:2 says that the Spirit of God hovered above the primordial Earth’s surface. This clue means that the subsequent description of early Earth (and the stages of its transformation) comes from the vantage point of an observer just above the surface of the waters, looking up at the sky and across the horizon, describing details as they would have appeared from that perspective.”¹²⁷³ “But with the point of view on the surface of the earth, looking up at the atmosphere of the earth, we recognize that God’s miracles are taking place in the atmosphere of the earth, not beyond it in the galaxy and the solar system.”¹²⁷⁴

Every narrative has a narrator with a perspective. The Holy Spirit was given a stated location in 1:2. He became the Narrator, and His stated location was the perspective for Genesis 1:3–31. The Spirit, not Moses, was on location just above the sea surface. Even the Father and Son, whom Hebrews 1:2 says were the active Agents of creation, were not given stated locations. Why was the omnipresent Spirit given a stated location if not for identifying

¹²⁷² David Toshio Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation*, JSOT Supplement Series 83 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989), 33–34.

¹²⁷³ Ross, *Origins*, 38.

¹²⁷⁴ Ross, *Time*, 149

His perspective for the narration of 1:3–31?¹²⁷⁵ The Spirit is the Person Who breathes out Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21) as the overseeing Divine Author. The Spirit’s location just above the planet’s surface makes sense as a perspective location to generations of Bible readers.

This perspective location explains why the light on day one was diffuse sunlight penetrating the thinning cloud layer for the first time and why the sun, moon, and stars, which were created in Genesis 1:1, were not reported until they were made to govern day and night, apparently through openings in the previously overcast sky above the Spirit, on the fourth workday.

The Holy Spirit presumably was the Narrator of Genesis 1. We may reasonably deduce that His stated location in 1:2 was the perspective for the events of the upcoming six days. So Genesis 1:3–31 records events seen only from that perspective location.

(8) DIFFUSE SUNLIGHT PENETRATING CLOUD TO NARRATOR BEGAN DAY ONE

Hugh Ross explains that on day one (he would equate day one with an era, with which I disagree) light broke through the opaque cloud to earth’s surface. “Light was not created on the first creation day. On that day the light already created ‘in the beginning’ suddenly broke through to the earth’s surface. This breakthrough required the transformation of the atmosphere (plus the interplanetary medium) from opaque to translucent.”¹²⁷⁶

“Job 38:8–9 affirms that Earth’s primordial waters were enshrouded by an opaque cloud cover:”¹²⁷⁷

Who shut up the sea behind doors [birth motif]
when it burst forth from the womb,
when I made the clouds its garment
and wrapped it in thick darkness? (NIV)

So day one was begun by light breaking through the cloud for the first time to the Observer.

Hebrew scholar Sailhamer explains that the light was diffuse sunlight: “Yet if the sun is meant to be included in the merism . . . in Genesis 1:1, then it is natural to assume that the

¹²⁷⁵ The Spirit’s omnipresence was not restricted. The location is for our benefit as the perspective of the narration we read.

¹²⁷⁶ Ross, *Time*, 149.

¹²⁷⁷ Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004), 232.

sun was created already in the first verse. If that is so, then the ‘light’ of verse 3 was simply the light of the sun.” “The expression ‘there was light’ is one way the Bible refers to sunlight.”¹²⁷⁸ “For example, see Genesis 44:3; Exodus 10:23; and Judges 19:26.”¹²⁷⁹ Exodus 10:23 says, “Israel had light.” The Hebrew, אֶרְאֶה אֹרֶךְ (‘‘had light’’ qal perfect 3rd ms) is very similar to Genesis 1:3, אֶרְאֶה יְהִי אֹרֶךְ (‘‘be light’’ qal imperfect jussive 3rd ms). Both indicated sunlight.

The whole universe, including the sun, moon, stars, and planet earth, had been created in Genesis 1:1. But darkness prevailed at the Spirit’s location just above earth’s sea (Gen. 1:2). Job 26:8–9 and 38:9 explain why the sea surface was dark—God had wrapped the sea in thick dark cloud cover. Then, at God’s command, there was light at the Narrator’s location, beginning day one, resulting in the first daylight-evening-nighttime-morning cycle on the rotating planet earth’s surface. Day is caused by the sun (Jer. 31:35), so the light that caused day one logically was diffuse sunlight piercing through the cloud mass for the first time to the Narrator’s location just above earth’s rotating surface, dividing day and night, just as Genesis 1:4 declares. Day and night occur today, only on a planet rotating in sunlight, and no text indicates a different source of light or different cause of day and night in Genesis 1:3–5. Day one ended in evening, night, and then morning as the Narrator’s location rotated out of the diffuse sunlight into darkness and, about twelve hours later, back into the edge of light.

Reasonably, the light beginning day one was diffuse sunlight penetrating the cloud for the first time down to the Narrator’s location on the rotating earth, causing day and night.

(9) THE SIX WORKDAYS WERE NORMAL DAY-NIGHT CYCLE DAYS

The two-stage theory emphasizes that all six workdays were normal, daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle solar days.

Wiseman says that the geologic-day or day-age of long-day theory fails to deal adequately with the Bible text. “The geologic ‘day’ theory” or day-age theory “does not deal with the six ‘evening and morning’ ” statements adequately. “Was each of them an indefinitely long night in which there was no light? Was the geologic night as long or almost

¹²⁷⁸ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 56.

¹²⁷⁹ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 251, chapter four, footnote 3.

as long as the geologic ‘day?’”¹²⁸⁰ The geologic long “day-age” interpretation is simply wrong. Wiseman continues, “I suggest that every time the days are mentioned in both these passages [Genesis 1 and Exodus 20:9–11] they are intended to be taken literally as ordinary days.”¹²⁸¹ I do not agree with Wiseman’s alternative solution, but at least he demonstrates that the day-age theory is inadequate.

Day one was a day-night-cycle solar day, because for the first time sunlight shone through the cloud mass to earth’s surface down to the Narrator’s location, making foggy daylight. As earth rotated, evening fell at the Narrator’s location, followed by night and then morning—by definition, a day-night-cycle solar day. Since the six days were sequentially numbered and day one was the defining unit, then the subsequent five workdays were also day-night-cycle solar days. Other occurrences of sequentially numbered יום (yôm, “day”) in the Hebrew Bible historical narrative are day-night-cycle days, strong evidence for six day-night-cycle days. Finally, in Exodus 20:11 the warrant for Israel’s six-day workweek only makes sense if God’s six workdays finishing and filling planet earth were six day-night-cycle solar days.

The cumulative weight of exegetical evidence (if one leaves out the external problem of the earth’s apparent age) supports six twenty-four-hour day-night-cycle solar days.

Westermann suggests that the initial creation and six days could be “each understood as a succession of begettings.”¹²⁸² This reflects the generational genre of Genesis 1:1-2:4a. A birth is in a specific day, not in a geological era. However, this genre would tend toward Payne’s idea of time between each begetting day before the next generation. However that may be, my point is that each of the six days of birth of each new work of God were normal days.

(9a) DID TIME PASS BETWEEN THE SIX DAYS? I SUGGEST CAUTION.

J. Barton Payne and Alan Hayward have suggested the idea that time passed, even extensive long eras, between the six day-night cycle workdays.¹²⁸³ Their idea allows old

¹²⁸⁰ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 23.

¹²⁸¹ Wiseman, *Revealed*, 18.

¹²⁸² Westermann, *Genesis Commentary*, 16. Westermann refers us to S. Lanersdorfer, *Die sumerischen Parallelen zur biblischen Urgeschichte: Alttest, Abhandlungen VII 5* (Münster, 1917) as an earlier advocate of this idea.

¹²⁸³ J. Barton Payne, “Theistic Evolution and the Hebrew of Genesis 1–2,” *Bulletin of the Evangelical*

earth creationism (OEC), yet with six literal days. Payne says that “the literal text reads, ‘one day’ (1:5), ‘a second day’ (1:8), etc.; so the days need not be taken consecutively but may be understood as separated by long ages.”¹²⁸⁴

Whether or not time passed between the days, Payne is correct in this observation that there is a discontinuity in the numbering between cardinal *day one* and ordinal day second, day third, day fourth, day fifth, and day sixth. His statement deserves an explanation, but in explaining, I am neither affirming nor denying his idea. A cardinal number tells the quantity of the numbered items. So at day one there was only one daylight-evening-nighttime-morning day. Had the next workday been numbered day two, there would have been only two days. No days could have passed between day one and day two. However, the next reference is to “day second,” an ordinal number. Ordinal numbers tell the order of the items—first, second, third, etc. They show only order, rank, or position; not quantity. Second means after first, but not that there were only two in quantity, because ordinals do not indicate quantity. For example, George Washington was United States President number one. There was no president before him. George Bush, Sr. was president number forty-one, but he was the *second* with the name George. George W. Bush is president number forty-three, but he is the only the *third* president with the name George. There were over forty presidents between the first and second Presidents named George. So day second means a day after day one, but not necessarily that only two days have passed. Therefore, Payne is right that second day means a day after the previously mentioned day, not necessarily the very next day. However, his analysis of the discontinuity in numbering only suggests that the Bible text *may* allow time between the days, not that the Bible certainly requires vast time between the days.

Therefore, the two-stage Biblical creation theory urges caution with this idea, because the Bible neither explicitly affirms nor explicitly denies that time actually passed between the six day-night-cycle workdays. The evidence both for and against time passage between the six days is implicational, not explicit.

What we can say is this: *If* the earth and created life on it really are older than 6,000–10,000 years (and I am not affirming that), from the standpoint of the Hebrew text, time passage between the days is the only exegetically reasonably supportable option, rather than

Theological Society 8 (1965), 87; Alan Hayward, *Creation and Evolution* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005).

¹²⁸⁴ Payne, *Theistic*, 87.

the much less likely proposal of long day-ages.

Meredith Kline in his 1958 article “Because It Had Not Rained” argues cogently that in Genesis 1—2, between miraculous creation acts in the six days, God used ordinary providence involving normal cause-effect secondary means.¹²⁸⁵ His idea should be considered seriously, because it would suggest that the normal providence cause and effect evidence in the geology of earth should be taken seriously. However, Kline’s argument does not prove time passage between the days.

Westermann claims that the initial creation and six days could be “each understood as a succession of begettings.”¹²⁸⁶ Naomi Steinberg says that “Genesis is a book whose plot is genealogy.”¹²⁸⁷ Genesis 1:1-2:4a seems to fit this generational pattern, because it ends in “These *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created” (KJV). In each successive *tôlê dôt* at the end of a narrative, the writer of that ancestral generation’s account is listed, just as we sign a letter about our lifetime sent to our great grand children at the end of the letter. But in 1:1-2:4a, the ancestral generation listed at the end in 2:4a is “the heavens and the earth.” The heavens and the earth seem to have been portrayed in the ancestral role before Adam. Since each generation was born on a specific day, this pattern fits the six day-night cycle days of Genesis 1. Since significant time always passed before the next generation, we may see time in the beginning before the next generation, day one; and possibly between each of the six days. This generational format is not forced onto the text, but is recorded in 2:4a, “This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.” But this generational format does not prove time passed between the six days.

The two-stage Biblical creation theory urges caution with their idea, because the Bible neither explicitly affirms nor denies time passage between the six day-night cycle workdays. Since the Bible neither explicitly affirms nor explicitly denies time passage between the six days, the two-stage Biblical creation theory says the same.

However, the two-stage Biblical creation theory insists, that if earth is older, the six workdays were normal daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle days, not day-ages.

(10) LUMINARIES GOVERNED DAY AND NIGHT ON FOURTH WORKDAY

¹²⁸⁵ Meredith G. Kline, “Because It Had Not Rained,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 20:2, 146-157.

¹²⁸⁶ Westermann, *Genesis*, 16.

¹²⁸⁷ Steinberg, “The Genealogical Framework,” 41-50.

Hugh Ross explains that God created the sun, moon, and stars “in the beginning” as an essential part of “the heavens,” but they began functioning in relationship to earth only on the fourth day. “The heavens and earth (*shamayim erets*) of verse 1 includes the entire physical universe of galaxies, stars, planets, etc.” But “earth’s primordial atmosphere” was still only translucent, not transparent, until the fourth day. God made the sun, moon, and stars “distinguishable on that [fourth] day.”¹²⁸⁸ The action on day four was the “transformation of the atmosphere from a translucent condition to one that is at least occasionally transparent.”¹²⁸⁹ Ross’s words “distinguishable” and “visible” do not correspond well with any word in Genesis 1:14–19. Ross already pointed out the concept of the Observer, whom I would take as the divine Narrator of the Genesis 1 text, God caused the luminaries to “be” in earth’s sky in relationship to the earth for the first time from the perspective of the Narrator.

Kline adds, “The very least that transpired on the ‘day’ in question [the fourth day] is that the sun was brought into a radical new relationship to the earth wherein it began to govern earth’s times and seasons and in general to affect life on earth as men now observe it to do.”¹²⁹⁰ Kline’s idea is that the sun on the fourth day began to “be” in *relationship* to earth by God’s ordinary providence just as it does today, in keeping with the principle of ordinary providence Kline derived from Genesis 2:5–6.

Schroeder explains, “Resolution of the conflict is found in the use of the word *luminaries* rather than *light* in Genesis 1:14.” “The atmosphere, however, was translucent, [until day four] not transparent. Therefore, individual luminaries were not distinguishable.”¹²⁹¹ Again, his word “distinguishable” does *not* properly reflect the Hebrew text, so I do not claim that word. But he has the basic idea.

Hebrew scholar John Sailhamer explains, “Though our English translations of Genesis often suggest that God created the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day, the Hebrew text does not demand, *or even allow for*, such an interpretation. The overall sense of Genesis 1 assumes that by the fourth day, the sun, moon, and stars are already in place.”¹²⁹² “According to the Hebrew text, God said, ‘Let the lights in the expanse be for separating the day and night. . . .’ God’s command, in other words, *assumes that the lights already exist in*

¹²⁸⁸ Ross, *Time*, 150-151.

¹²⁸⁹ Ross, *Time*, 153.

¹²⁹⁰ Kline, “Not Rained, 150.”

¹²⁹¹ Schroeder, *Big Bang*, 130.

¹²⁹² Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 30-32.

the expanse.”¹²⁹³ “If the difference between the syntax of verse 6 (the use of ה י ה alone) and verse 14 (ה י ה with an infinitive) is significant, then it suggests that the author does not understand his account of the fourth day as an account of the creation of the lights but, on the contrary, he assumes that the heavenly lights have already been created ‘in the beginning.’”¹²⁹⁴

The two-stage Biblical creation theory claims that on the fourth workday God made the already created luminaries “be” in the expanse of the sky to separate and govern day and night, be time-markers, and lights בִּרְעֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם (bⁱr^eqîa hashāmayim), “in the expanse of the sky” (1:14, 15, 17 NIV). Five reasons suggest this understanding:

(1) The command in Genesis 1:14 beginning the fourth workday is a purpose clause with the verbal group, “let . . . be . . . to separate.” The young earth creationism theory proposes that by this command God created the universe on the fourth day, but their proposal is exegetically implausible for several reasons: (1) י ה י (y^ehî, “let be”; from hāyâh, “to be”) with the infinitive¹²⁹⁵ of purpose, ל י ה בִּרְעֵי (l^ehab^edîl, “for separating”) signifies that on the fourth workday the luminaries were given a purpose. The purpose was in three parts: “to separate the day from the night”; to be “for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years”; and “for lights.” These all were “in the expanse” of the sky. This purpose construction assumes that the subject, the luminaries, already existed. The luminaries had existed since Genesis 1:1 when God created the heavens, which to the author, Moses, meant “sun, moon, and stars” (Deut. 4:19).

(2) The location in which the “let be . . . to separate” occurred was the רְעֵי (rāqîa’), the expanse of open air formed on the second workday between the primeval ocean water below and the waters above (reasonably the cloud layer described by Job). Obviously, God did not בָּרָא (bārā’, “create”) the universe in our lower atmosphere. What God did was make the luminaries function in the רְעֵי (rāqîa’, “expanse”) of open air below the clouds, in relation to earth’s surface (the Narrator’s location) for the first time. Only the functioning in relationship to the earth could have been in the רְעֵי (rāqîa’, “expanse”) of open air below the clouds, so day four is only about that functional relationship in which the

¹²⁹³ Sailhamer, *Unbound*, 132.

¹²⁹⁴ Sailhamer, *Narrative*, 93.

¹²⁹⁵ Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar*, #114h, 348.

luminaries for the first time were commanded to “be” in the sky.

(3) The command was completed at the end of 1:15 when the Spirit declared the work done, “And it was so.” Young earth creationists claim that verse 16 described the *creation* of the sun, moon, and stars. Sailhamer replies, “At the end of verse 15, the author states, ‘and it was so.’ This expression marks the end of the author’s report [of the action commanded] and the beginning of his comment in verse 16. Thus, verse 16 is not an account of the creation of the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day, but rather a remark directed to the reader to draw out the significance of that which had previously been recounted: ‘So God [and not anyone else] made the lights and put them into the sky.’ ” The report of fulfillment in 1:16–18 confirms that these purposes for the luminaries were indeed accomplished and that it was God Who accomplished them all. In the report, the verb אָשָׂה (*‘āsāh*, “made”), although separated by other words, is grammatically connected to לְמַעַן שְׂמֹרֵתָם (l^e*mēm^eshelet*, “for” “rule, govern, dominion”), reporting that the luminaries were, as God commanded in 1:14, made governors of day and night in the open-air expanse of the atmosphere. Genesis 1:16 was not a creation command and does not report a previous creation command, for there was no creation command on the fourth day. Finally, Genesis 1:17–18 identified the location that God יָתַן (yitēn from nātan; “give, put, set”¹²⁹⁶) the luminaries in the expanse of the sky. This, too, was not a creation command. The action of the fourth workday was the three listed functions of the luminaries in relationship to earth’s sky for the first time, not the creation of the luminaries.

(4) Conspicuously absent from the entire fourth workday is בָּרָא (*bārā’*), create.

(5) If only events from the Spirit’s location were reported, then a supposed creation of luminaries either *ex nihilo* or *ex materia* in outer space above an unbroken cloud layer would not even have been reported. Logically, God progressively thinned earth’s cloud layer through the first four days. Diffuse sunlight pierced the cloud to the Divine Narrator’s location starting day one. Then the cloud rose from the sea for an open-air expanse on the second workday. Finally, on the fourth workday, the luminaries began separating day and night and serving as timekeepers in relationship to earth through the first clear openings in the cloud layer, as recorded in Job 26:13a: “By His breath the heavens are cleared.”

Two-stage Biblical creation *disagrees* with two mistranslations, the claim that the

¹²⁹⁶ Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, #5414, 678.

luminaries were “made visible,” because none of the terms means “make visible.” Second, two-stage Biblical creation *disagrees* with the claim that אָשָׂא (*‘āsāh*; “do, make”) in the report means “created,” because אָשָׂא (*‘āsāh*), in the context of the report, could only mean “create” if the previous command in the same unit was a creation command. God’s command was “be” lights in the expanse of the sky to separate and govern day and night; and “be” signs for seasons, days, and years; and “be” lights in the רָאִיָּהּ (*rāqīā’*), the open-air expanse of earth’s sky—purpose commands for functions in relationship to the earth, not creation commands. These jussive commands logically were accomplished through the first openings in the cloud layer, from the perspective of the Divine Narrator.

On the fourth workday, God made the already created luminaries to govern day and night, be time-markers, and be lights in the open-air expanse of planet earth’s sky.

SUMMARY OF TWO-STAGE BIBLICAL CREATION

Genre: The author designed Genesis 1:1–2:4a as a chiastic *Geschehensbogen*, formed of a series of succinct, chronological, historical, narrative annals, with the ultimate theological purpose of revealing the God of Israel as the Creator, and the etiological purpose of declaring His creation of the heavens and earth and all within them, in ten generational strophes consisting of two sub-narratives—the beginning, then the eight command units in the six days ending with the seventh day of rest.

Stage One: In the beginning, a time period of unstated length inherent in the word בְּרֵשִׁית (*b^ērē’shīt*, in the beginning), God created *ex nihilo* the heavens (sun, moon, and stars [Deut. 4:19]) and unfinished planet earth (Gen. 1:1). God birthed the sea (Job 38:8) on planet earth and wrapped the sea in thick dark cloud as swaddling, blocking out light (Job 26:7–9; 38:8, 9). This is the birth strophe of the heavens and the earth.

Transition: As the beginning period concluded, in Genesis 1:2 planet earth was still uninhabitable and uninhabited (but not chaos). Its deep primeval ocean was dark (we may infer darkened by the thick, dark cloud-cover). (Since planet earth alone was described as unfinished and dark, we may infer that the heavens were already largely completed and

lighted.) The Spirit's location was stated (we may infer as Narrator-on-location stating His perspective for the narrative of eight command unit strophes plus the final strophe of the day of rest as God's upcoming work in 1:3–31).

Stage Two: By the eight command units of Genesis 1:3–31, involving six daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle workdays (Exod. 20:11), in a generational genre in which God made planet earth's sky, sea, and land lighted, habitable, and inhabited. In Genesis 1:3 God commanded light. The Spirit reported, "And light was" (we may infer diffuse sunlight penetrating for the first time the thinning cloud layer to the Narrator's location just above the ocean), thus beginning literal daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle day one. God separated daytime of diffuse sunlight from nighttime, completing day one (logically by earth rotating the Spirit's location from the sunlit side into dark away from the sun, then back to the edge of sunlight again). Day one was a normal daylight-evening-nighttime-morning-cycle day, setting the meaning of "day" for each of God's succeeding workdays.

On a second workday God formed an open-air expanse between the waters of the sea below and the waters of the unbroken overcast cloud layer above (we may infer by the fog rising up from the sea, producing an open-air expanse). By His third command unit, God gathered the waters under the sky into one area so dry land appeared (to the Spirit). By His fourth command unit, on the third day-night-cycle workday, God commanded the earth to produce seed-bearing fruit-bearing trees. On a fourth day-night-cycle workday God commanded the (previously created) luminaries to be in the open-air expanse of earth's sky (we may infer from the Narrator's perspective) to separate day and night; be signs for seasons, days, and years; and be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on earth (we may infer through the first clear openings in the cloud above the Narrator [Job 26:13a]). On a fifth workday God created aquatic and flying animal life. By His seventh command unit, God made three groups of land animal life—wild animals, lower scampering animals, and domestic animals. On the sixth day, by His eighth command unit, God made humans, uniquely in His image, who could know and glorify Him forever.

The narrative began with the creation of the heavens and earth in Genesis 1:1 and ended in the *tôl^edôt*, the generations, of the heavens and earth in Genesis 2:4a.

The succeeding genealogies date Adam somewhat over 6,000 years ago. But the universe was created in the beginning, a period of time unspecified by the Bible in length,

before the six workdays; so the universe is undated by the Bible.

AN ANCIENT ORIGIN KERYGMA

The ten theories have some odd claims that do not fit Scripture, but these theories also have claims that do fit the over one hundred Hebrew and Greek Bible texts on creation. When those Scripture-matching claims are united from both the ten theories and from the Bible creation texts, they are the same message. Together those claims reveal what we might call an origin kerygma—an ancient proclamation that God created the heavens and the earth (all things) in the beginning, then by (eight) commands involving six workdays made earth's sky, sea, and land habitable and inhabited. This origin kerygma is proclaimed repeatedly (although often abbreviated) throughout Scripture: Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Exodus 20:11, 31:17; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 38; Psalm 104:1-10; Proverbs 8:22-31; Isaiah 42:5; Jeremiah 32:17; Zechariah 12:1; John 1:1-3; Acts 4:24; Colossians 1:16, 17; Hebrews 1:10; Revelation 4:11, 10:6, and 14:7.

A secondary claim in this origin kerygma is that God did the creation in stages, starting with the creation of the heavens and earth in the beginning. But the primary focus of this origin kerygma is that God is the Creator of all things.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, I have examined and evaluated by the Bible creation texts the claims of ten major creation theories, and I have proposed an eleventh consolidated or unified or combined creation theory. This eleventh theory may match what seems to be an ancient origin kerygma. In doing all this, I have come to five conclusions.

First, all ten major creation theories offer great insights into the Bible texts on creation. A tendency among advocates of some creation theories is to see alternative theories as targets for attack, rather than sources of learning about creation. Every major creation author whose work I have read has very valuable insights. Before beginning this study, I had already developed my understanding of the two-stage Biblical creation theory from the Bible. Yet every author whose work I read contributed to my nuanced version of this theory to improve my explanation of the two-stage theory.

Second, all the creation theories I studied, not only in my evaluation but in each other's evaluations, erred at some rather major point. They could prove each other wrong in at least one major point. I am not claiming that my version of two-stage Biblical creation is the perfect answer, but it may approach a little closer in the hermeneutical spiral to what God said that He did when He created the heavens and the earth. The reasons my theory may come a little closer is that I studied the five major and over one hundred shorter Bible texts on creation, and I have been listening to the other theories' authors—both their Biblically supported claims and their problematic claims. Truly, I stand on the shoulders of Biblical giants.

Third, others before me have espoused this theory—that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; then God worked on the uninhabitable, uninhabited earth by eight command units involving six normal day-night cycle workdays to make it habitable and full of life. But for some reason unknown to me, no one whose work I have read has articulated this theory thoroughly. Charles Hodge claimed this view was one of two major views. Davidson also claimed that it is one of several major creation theories. However, unlike the other theories, it is not a theory with some special idea. It seems to be simply the view that

one comes away with by carefully reading the Bible text, especially carefully reading it in the Hebrew.

Fourth, skeptics claim that the Bible disagrees with itself. In contrast, the more I have developed this two-stage Biblical creation theory, the more I have found that the Bible texts on creation all fit together. Each time I thought I might have found a contradiction, I committed myself to be willing to give up this theory, if the contradiction proved real. But none did. Every apparent contradiction dissolved as I continued studying the Bible texts and considered the exegetical work of those creationist exegetes who have gone before me. There really is an integrated answer to the question, What did God say that He did when He created the heavens and the earth?

Fifth, the most exegetically supported claims of the ten theories do seem to support creation in two stages—“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” but earth was uninhabitable, uninhabited, and darkened. Then God, by eight command units involving six day-night cycle workdays, made earth lighted, habitable, and inhabited; culminated with humans who can know, worship, and glorify Him, our Creator and Savior, forever.

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