

## Elaine Phillips, OT History, Literature, and Theology, Lecture 3

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### A. Preliminary Matters

Well, I know it's just a couple minutes early yet, but, I was going to spend this ten minutes before class working on a few more of your names, because I'm not very good at it yet. And of course, the fact that we didn't have class on Monday meant that I forgot everything I learned as of last Friday!

So, forgive me; we've had a little computer problem, but I think we're all set to go, at least fairly soon. We were also going to sing today, by way of starters, but it wouldn't be a pretty sound, as you can probably tell right now. So, if you don't mind, I'll put that off until next time, and perhaps I'll have a voice that sings, as opposed to croaks a little bit. Instead, in a moment, I'm going to start us out by reading parts of Psalm 104, which has everything to do with creation. And, as you may remember if you've done your reading for today, we are talking about creation today, so this fits in very well.

However, just a couple announcements before I do that. First of all, again totally optional, but for those of you who have interest in some of the scientific aspects of these issues that we're discussing, I would invite you to come tonight at 7:15 right here. My husband, Perry, has studied extensively in this area; he's an astrophysicist. I think Ted will corroborate this if you think it's simply the fact that I'm biased because he's my husband - which is true! I am biased because he's my husband. He's a good teacher, and he knows what he's talking about. Is that right, Ted? (Ok, two thumbs up.) He's one of these people who has an extraordinary gift of being able to make complicated things both understandable and interesting. That doesn't exist too often in some of our esoteric spheres, but in any case I would invite you to come if you're interested. [This lecture is also posted online]

We're going to pick up that second question and then do a little bit of review after we read parts of Psalm 104, which again, as I said, is sort of a way of introducing this; and then take some time to pray together. So, let me just read for you some of these wonderful affirmations of God's activity in creation, because it does indeed set the stage

for us perfectly as we think about the topic for today. So, Psalm 104, I'll be spot reading through it. "Praise the LORD, O my soul! O Lord, my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty." Verse 2, "He wraps himself with light, as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters." You're going to see in that, or hear in that if you're not watching the text go by, a poetic representation of chapter 1 of Genesis as well. It's quite lovely. Verse 5, "He set the earth on its foundations, it can never be moved." Verses 13 and 14, "He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work. He makes the grass grow for the cattle, and plants for humans to cultivate, bringing forth food from the earth." Verses 19 and 20, "The moon marks off the seasons; the sun knows when to go down." Verse 24, "How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures." Verses 27 and 28, "These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up, when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things." Verse 30, "When you send your Spirit, they are created and you renew the face of the earth." And then in closure, verse 33 and following, "I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him as I rejoice in the LORD. Praise the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord." And of course, you may know that "Praise the Lord" as we've rendered it in English, is "hallelujah." So, as I say, "Praise the LORD" you're thinking in your heads, "hallelujah," which has a tremendous rejoicing connotation to it. Let's take some time to pray together as we start.

*Our gracious heavenly Father, precious Redeemer and most Holy Spirit of truth. Help us to catch even a small glimpse of the majesty that the Psalmist is portraying here. And the power and the might. Father, shake us out of our complacency if we're there, and help us see again your glory and your goodness. As we study together today, I pray that you would help me to teach with humility and clarity. Help all of us to learn together as we sit at the feet of your Holy Spirit and your word. And so we offer you our thanks. Father, as we've had a transition in our nation's government we do bathe our administration and our new leader in our prayers. That you would grant him your*

*wisdom and your grace as he faces many challenges. So help us to be faithful to pray as you have exhorted us to do. And now we offer you this hour; we pray these things in Christ's name with thanksgiving. Amen.*

### **B. Initial Student Questions on Genesis 1 and 2**

Ok, you'll forgive me if I sniffle or drool over cough drops today. Then we'll make it through this hour fairly well. I want to stop talking for a while. So, as you've read Genesis 1 through 3, and think particularly of Genesis 1 and 2 right now, because that's pretty much what we're doing today, is there anything that you find particularly challenging? Whether or not we're going to answer your questions, I don't know. But I invite you to pose some things right now, just to get us going. Any particular questions? Is it Lucky? Ok, go ahead. (Student). Ok, so when were angels created? Good question. By the way, I'm not necessarily going to deal with that in the formal lecture, so I'll give you at least the early Jewish rabbis' interpretation which was, because on day two you don't have any acknowledgment that things are good, and because some of the angelic host ends up having a component of evil, in other words the fallen angels, some people suggest that's when, but that is just a thought.

Yes, behind Lucky is....oh help me out. Cassie, thanks. (Student). It's debatable, and possibly it's both. Yes, that's an excellent question, and we will get into that a little bit more, at least I hope. Anything else, further questions? Kristen? Thanks. (Student). I like figural. That's kind of good. So the question is, you know the creation of Eve, what does this imply in terms of the process. Is that kind of what you're getting at? Yes, good. Hopefully we'll get into that a little bit later on. Last chance. Sarah. (Student). Was it God's intention that ultimately Adam and Eve would indeed eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Ok, that's one I can't ever begin to answer. But I'm going to pose some things about what that "knowledge of good and evil" might mean, and that might help us a little bit. Maybe. Might just obfuscate the issue a bit too; who knows? Great questions. Some of them we'll address; some of them we won't. You probably won't be satisfied with what I have to say. Let me just say this before we get going. I prayed in my prayer very intentionally for a bit of humility on my part as we address

some of these issues, because it's been my observation over the past however many years I've been teaching this class, that this is the place where there are probably the most vociferous differences of opinion that are expressed. I will say that I would love to see as much passion invested in things like what the prophets had to say about justice and mercy, but that's not the case. So as we address these areas where there is potential controversy, I want above all to be, I hope, as gracious as I possibly can. If I'm not, please feel free to kind of catch me. You're going to know where I come down on the issue, at least I hope you do. This is not an area where you present a whole smorgasbord of options and then say, "you choose!" because I think there are some theories that have evidence for them that are better than others. But there are differences of opinion on that, and I certainly don't want to denigrate anybody who holds a position different than what I might happen to.

With regard to the creation issue, years ago one of the better commentaries on Genesis, written by a guy named Derek Kidner, said that there are 53 different positions with regard to how to deal with Genesis 1. Well, if there's 53, and that's a number of years ago, they're all going to be very nuanced and we have to be careful in terms of how we address it. So have you got my point? Ok. I want to deal with this carefully and graciously. I encourage your questions and comments as we go along. We may not be able to address all of them, that's why the open forum is scheduled a week from tonight, to pursue some of these things further.

### **C. Brief Review of General and Special Revelation**

Well, let me just review a little bit because this is extremely important for what we're talking about today. And that is, we have to remember that general revelation - in other words God's revelation in nature, God's revelation of his power and divine attributes (which is what Romans 1 says) in the natural world - is extremely important here, because we can't in any way discount what we see when we very carefully study what's out there in the world around us. Whether it's the whole realms of space and the whole universe, or whether it's quantum particles, or whether it's geology, we can't ignore that evidence. So general revelation is extremely important. Having said that, it is

equally important to take exceedingly seriously what it is the Scriptures say so that when they use certain words or certain expressions, we're going to say "yes, that has some implications for how we understand this whole business." So am I speaking English here? We can't forget that both of these are God's messages to us. We have to take both very seriously as we talk about the whole issue of creation, and Genesis 1 and 2 particularly.

#### **D. Overview of Genesis**

All right, let's see what we can do. I rather like that picture; it gets us thinking about the beauty of what God created, in addition to the vast reaches of space, which we're going to come back to in just a moment. Here's an overview of Genesis. First of all, what does Genesis mean? Just yell it out. What does Genesis mean? Yes, "beginning" or "beginnings." Actually the English word "genesis" is taken from the Greek translation of the word in Hebrew [Gen 2:4] that is something that you probably encounter when you say, or when you read, "this is the account of"--*toledoth*. The Hebrew has been translated into Greek, and then that comes over in English. We think of it as beginnings, and that's reasonable.

We're going to talk, as we talk about Genesis 1-11 in the next week or so, of this overarching focus on the kinds of things that we're going to get a sense of the beginnings or origins of. In very broad brush, beautiful poetry, Genesis talks about the origin of the universe. But here's the thing; it's very broad brushstroke poetry, and it's one chapter. This is why we need to go to the natural sciences to get a sense of *really* what's involved in that incredible creation. That's why, if you come tonight, you'll get a little bit of a slice as we think of time and majestic space. Ok? Astronomy particularly gives us a feeling for the vast reaches of the universe. So, universe and humankind, obviously we're going to pick that up today when talking both about Adam and Eve, and the implications of being made in God's image. We'll talk a little bit more about those things. Lord willing on Friday and beyond that, we're going to see the tragedy of the origin of sin as it enters into the human sphere.

And then obviously the covenant we'll pick up a good deal as well. And then,

finally, ethnic distinctions, which are interesting. What defines ethnicity? What do we mean when we say “ethnic”? What are the component parts of that? Anybody know? Help me out. (Student). Katie. Go ahead. (Student). Cultural background is part of it, good. And what’s going to create the cultural components here, particularly? Because there’s more to ethnic than simply cultural, I would suggest. We have an American culture, but there are a number of subcultures that are often based on ethnicity, aren’t there? Ok, I need a name back there. (Student). You’re Ginger. Go ahead. (Student). Yes, beliefs are going to probably transcend things that we might want to think of as ethnic as well. Go back to give yourself a little clue here; think of what’s in Genesis 1 through 11, and let’s see where we have some particular ethnic distinctions that might be showing up there. Ok, now I’m seeing another hand that I can’t identify! (Student). Matt. (Student). Right, language has a lot to do with ethnicity, doesn’t it?-- not everything, but language. And we certainly see some language distinction don’t we? Particularly when we have our famous tower of Babel incident. So that’s going to be one of the defining factors. Now, you’re absolutely right that factors into culture a good deal as well. What else?

Go ahead. (Student). Right, and what do you want to do with that location idea? (Student). That’s fine. You’re right, and I’ll just give you another “L” word, and that’s land. We may not think of it quite so much, because we’re a fairly mobile, global world right now. But, go back even a thousand years, probably less than that, and who people were was very much defined by where they lived. And so ethnicity has a lot to do with your association with location. I’m just going to use the term land because land has such an importance as we work our way through the Old Testament. And of course, we have that particularly after we have the sons of Noah heading off in their three different directions, don’t we? They’re going particular places, and those places are actually going to define these groups of people, and then there are subgroups within those. Ok, we’ll come back to some of that later, but that gives us a little bit of a sense.

At any rate, still on our overview of Genesis, in addition to these overarching things that we’re going to talk about in Genesis 1 through 11, we then have the beginning of God’s choosing a specific people, descendants of Abraham and the whole of idea of

the covenant focusing in on the Abrahamic covenant, and their chosenness in order to be a blessing. So, that's the rest of Genesis and we'll be getting there in about two weeks or so, or beyond.

### **E. Potential for Controversy**

Let's carry on a little bit. As I said a moment ago, in all this discussion, particularly the material we're doing today, there is indeed potential for controversy. As so I just want to make us aware of this. There's nothing wrong with arguing by the way, and I invite you to argue with me. One of the really sad aspects of the educational system from which most of you have come is that you've learned simply, I think, to accept things that people like me spout out, and not discuss them. If you argue with me, you have to give me the right to argue back, ok? Is that fair? One of my absolute favorite memories from my graduate school - I know I'm taking a tangent, but one of my absolute favorite memories from my graduate school experience was having, and this was in a Jewish institution, the instructor sitting at one end of the table, four of us sort of in the middle, and then a Rabbi whose name was Rabbi Novasellar, sitting at the other end of the table. He was, by the way, in his 70's and he was pursuing a Ph.D. at that point, just because he wanted to. They stood while they were talking about the text of the Talmud. (You've read about that, or you will, in Dr. Wilson's book.) They didn't just placidly talk about the text of the Talmud; they stood at each end of the table, and yelled at each other, and pounded the text. But you know what? They also made sure that they had their *kippah* on as they were reading the text. They were very respectful. And after they were done yelling at each other and class was over, they went off and had coffee together because they were the best of friends. You know, learn to talk that way, learn to think that way, learn to really engage with the material that's going on here. So we'll learn to think that way, that's fine.

Two things first of all: there's some discussion, maybe not in our circles particularly, but specifically when we're getting into reading about Genesis and the first five books of Moses, as to whether or not Moses actually wrote them. Are you aware of that? [Lot of discussion.] Did Moses write this text, or was it written by groups of people,

unnamed folks, as much as 400, 500, and maybe 800 or 900 years afterwards in terms of its final editing. Now, that's not an issue that I spend a lot of time on here; if you want to pursue that further, take Pentateuch at some point when we really get into it. In fact, we're doing it now in the Pentateuch class, issues of authorship and how to understand Moses' role. I think we make a huge mistake if we remove Moses entirely from the writing of this text. Even as you read the text, you see that he's involved in writing aspects of it down. But having said that, there may well be a place for someone later on editing this text. So, there's some issues here. There's a lot of controversy that shows up there.

That one probably doesn't interest you nearly as much as the second one, because the second one is going to get us into some of the issues with regard to science. So, for purposes of composition, is it intended to be a historical and factual? This has particular implications with regard to scientific fact. Is it a truthful statement? Is that the purpose for which God inspired this text? Or is it intended to do something entirely different, and we shouldn't hold it to criteria that are historically based or scientifically based? This is an important question.

The second option there - which has been thrown into your lecture outline, by the way; if you have your lecture out, you know that's not here. There are those who think this is intended to be simply a theological statement, with no intention to its being historical or scientific. Or, kind of taking that even farther along, is it intended simply to be a myth? Now, don't think when you see the word "myth" of our usual definition of myth, which is a whole bunch of polytheistic gods in Greco-Roman kind of culture, fighting with each other. That's not what we're talking about when scholars in this particular sphere use the term "myth." Myth is, as I've defined it up here (and this is a simple definition but it'll do for us) - myth is narrative; it's not factually accurate, but conveys universal truths. Now, some folks will put together this idea of myth with Genesis 1 through 11. We can't hold it to a standard of scientific factual historical accuracy, but that's not the point. It's intended simply to convey truth. They'll put that idea together with its theological import and say, "it's only intended to teach us

something theological.” Am I making sense with that? Do I need to say it over again, or are you ok? Some of you are shaking your heads, “no, please go on.” All right, we’ll go on.

That leads us, of course, into this nasty land mine [creation and evolution] right here (there’s a whole bunch of land mines) but we need to address at least some of the issues in this regard. There are also some interesting issues, as we talk about Genesis 1 and 2, with regard to gender. Not only in terms of the creation of Eve, but some of the implications as to what she was doing alongside Adam, and how God designed this whole thing to unfold. So we’ll talk about that and then pick it up when we talk about the fall, Lord willing, on Friday. And then, this is an interesting one as well, and we can only begin to talk about this because I obviously have no idea, not being able to plumb the mind of God. But those of you who are philosophers will wrestle with this all the time. How do we think of the whole issue of the origin of evil, which is such a palpable, awful thing to contend with, when we’re talking about Genesis 1? Where does it come in, and how do we address it? So those are the issues that we will address, or at least think about a little bit.

## **F. The Issues of Creation and Evolution**

Now, ready to carry on? First off, in fact this is the place we’re going to spend most of our time today, let me just talk you through some of the things that we need to have on our radar screen as we’re dealing with this material, and then we’ll get to the biblical data. When we use the terms “creation” and “evolution,” or “creationism” and ‘evolutionism,’ most people have some very decided notions in terms of what those terms mean and they may not necessarily be appropriate. “Creationism” - if you were to kind of lob that term into the *New York Times* editorial office, what would they think? Oh, those people in Dover, Pennsylvania who are just all interested in Intelligent Design and teaching that God created this world in 7 days, each one having 24 hours. Right? That’s what a lot of people think when they hear the word “creation” or “creationism,” because that’s been the public persona that’s been presented in the press. Likewise, some of us hear the word “evolution” and what do we think? Ah, godless ways of thinking about all

this stuff - simply presuming that we've risen from a mass of protoplasm. Maybe both of those caricatures are indeed just that—caricatures.

Now, right from the get-go I'm going to tell you, you probably know this already if you kept your ear to the ground, but there are differences of opinion at Gordon College in terms of how to think about these data. What I'm going to tell you is not necessarily going to comport exactly with what the natural sciences department tells you, or at least the biology department. That's fine. This is where we have our discussions, right? But listen, let's at least work our way through this. For my purposes, as I'm going to try to talk through this discussion, "evolution," the first word we want to deal with, has particular reference to the origin of life. In other words, it presumes that life spontaneously arose. That's one of the factors that those who deal with evolution are affirming. And I, of course, will have some problems with that for reasons that lodge back in Genesis 1. It also has to do with the appearance of humankind. If you've taken some classes in biology, whether here or elsewhere, there is a sense that human kind has evolved in a rather systematic process all the way through, which has taken lots of time. That's fine, but does not give, I would suggest, any credence to what Genesis 1 says in terms of what God has done to create life, in the first case; and human beings, Adam and Eve, in the second. We'll come back to that.

Having said that, I think it's exceedingly important here to distinguish between what we're calling macro and micro evolution. Now, maybe there are better terms. You don't like that term, Zach. (Student). Ok, go ahead. (Student).

Right, and this is where I'm going to definitely refer you back to your biology background for all these interests. My understanding is, however, that as we talk about these things, we're still left with some rather significant gaps. I'm well aware that you have these mating issues and you will also have correspondence of DNA. But what's really interesting in that whole DNA discussion is that you'd expect that [close correspondence] from reading the biblical record. Interestingly enough, when the biblical record is talking about the creation of all of living creatures, it uses a term with regard to

us as humans and it uses that term with regard to everything that creeps on the ground as well. It uses the same term - *nephesh hayah*. So even the biblical record, in that tiny little use of that term, indicates that there's going to be some real interesting commonality. But having said that, there are some obvious distinctions when we come to the creation of humankind - which is the implantation of the breath of God into human beings, Genesis 2.

Now again, you know, there's a lot here that I don't know. I'll grant you that right away. But I think we still need to at least make some sort of a distinction between the changes that we see on a regular basis - evolutionary changes - and some of the major things that have transpired in terms of what you and I are as, frankly, the peak of creation, and the remarkable nature of our existence and what you have in some other aspects of life. We share lots of DNA, no question about it. Yet some particular distinctions, fossil records, too, are still not complete enough for us to say complete succession through here. If you're going to talk about it in contemporary terms, we don't have a complete fossil record. So, yes, come back next week. We can discuss it further because again you know I might have come to some areas that I'm going to say, "I don't know," but we can have a discussion.

The other thing we need to say as well is that some people throw up their hands in dismay at the term evolution, and yet there's evolution in the solar system all the time. Those of you who have taken an astronomy class are well aware of the term stellar evolution, what that implies and the fact that it has implications for life. It's not directly connected to it, but it has implications for life. Come tonight; that'll help.

Now again I know that I have given just slices of time here. But I think we need to keep in mind that if we're going to hold to an evolutionary model for the whole thing, then we do have to read Genesis 1 and 2 as either a theological statement (more about that in a moment - how we can do that and the implications of that) or we read it as myth. Again, those two might go together. Am I clear so far? And again, I welcome questions. I'm going to cut you off not because I don't want to talk about it but because we have some things to do. Caleb. The last statement? Yes. If we are going for an evolutionary

model of this whole process, then we're talking about long, long, long periods of time, without God's direct intervention.

Two more things in terms of a switch in focus; we've talked about some things we want to think about with regard to evolution. Let's talk about some things we want to think about regard to creation. If we're going to hold a primarily creation model, there are all sorts of nuances here. God is the beginner; God's the one who's not only begun but also designed it so that it works extraordinarily well from the outer reaches all the way down to the most small, inner particles. Again, quantum physics - nothing like some design there. And He's also the Source of life. This is going to be the place where the creation model, no matter which phase of creation model you take, is going to differ from the evolutionary model. Because we're taking a creation model, God has created life, as opposed to simply letting it rise. That's the issue. I would go as far as to say that He has also created humankind as a special creation. Having said that, I think it's fair to say that if we can recognize even a bit who God is, and the nature of God as He's created and created life and if we're sort of on top of the creative stack, if you will, if we're made in His image, there's something awfully incredible about the value of our lives. That's important to keep in mind.

The last line is also exceedingly important, because this is where people from the outside often don't understand the within that creation position, there is a wide range of possibilities. It works all the way from young earth creationism, which does say that God did this in several literal days, each 24 hours, to the old earth creationism approach, which says God created but each day is a much, much larger period of time, and these concepts fold in that context. If you read the assignment for today, one of them was to read the article that Perry wrote with regard to 24 hour days in Genesis and how best to understand that.

Okay, so far so good? Let me hold onto that question in terms of what "image" means because we're going to get there eventually. Yes, Ginger. [student] Yes, and this is the part where Zach was challenging me. People who talk about microevolution say there are, without question, in the simple ongoing of life, due to natural selection and

mutations of all those kind of things, changes taking place. And we see that if we simply look at an array of human beings across the world. There are changes that you see, in terms of skin color, hair style, etc. They're changes that take place; we're all human beings. That's the micro thing. Macro means rather significant jumps from, let's say, something that is a horse into a something that's a camel. That's a bad illustration, but you know, a major species jump at that point. That would be macro. Okay?

### **G. The Biblical Data**

Let's carry on and see what we can do with this. You've read the biblical data, so here we go. It does say - if we're going to take special revelation seriously, we have to understand this - "In the beginning, God created." Now, however you deal with that is up to you, but if you're going to read it as a myth, that's going to have some implications. If we're going to read this literally, then we have to understand that's going to have implications as well: "In the beginning, God created." As you read Genesis 1, and I'm going to kind of map out the chart here in a moment, the things to know about Genesis 1 is that, contrary to what you've read in the *Enuma Elish (Old Testament Parallels)*, this account shows not only poetry, but a chosen orderly progression in creation. We're going to look at that order in a moment. It's brief, but it encompasses the entire universe. Working all the way from heavens and earth, which is bigger than we can possibly imagine, all the way down to every aspect of life. So, poetic, ordered, brief - structured by the word which (as I tried to explain to you last Friday) has some rather tremendous implications in terms of how words can work to describe not only general revelation but, perhaps, special revelation. Revelation of those spheres that are outside what we can measure.

[Here's your quiz question for the day. What percentage of the created order is observable and measurable? That's a nasty question but it's something I said almost a week ago. Does anybody remember? Joanna. Yes, 4.6%. Okay. Everything else is stuff we know is there but we can't get our hands on it. Words are an important way of talking

about some aspects of that if we're thinking in part of that being supernatural realms.]

Anyway, water's the key element as the Spirit moved on the face of the water. Now, I'm not sure how far you want to push this, but I'm big on the term *adumbration*. Have I used that with you yet? Have we used *adumbration*? Great. It's going to keep coming up over and over and over again in the text. And isn't that interesting to see (because adumbration means foreshadowing and looking ahead); isn't it interesting to see that right away we've got some facets of the divine Person, showing up in this creation account. It's God creating, Word is there (and John 1 does some interesting things with Word and the presence of the word in creation) and the Spirit is there as well. At any rate, goodness and light are significant. And I would suggest to you that when God sees the light and pronounces it good, we have at least the possibility of understanding there's some sort of a moral component built into this whole thing as well. That gets into the philosopher's realm, and I'm not going any further in that right now. But think about it. Right from the get-go, God articulates something good about his creation, and He'll continue to do that throughout Genesis 1.

Well, here are further biblical data that I particularly note in regard to the chart that I was talking about earlier. Again, this gives us some possible ways of understanding this whole story. Notice (and I'm lifting here from Meredith Kline, and others, who worked through this stuff), we have on the left hand side, in days 1 through 3, large structures, if you will. Some people call it, the framework. Light and darkness, major creative distinctions are made at that point, but it's not until day 4 that you have these specific lights put into the large framework. Likewise, on day 2, waters and sky – a major distinction between the waters above this firmament, whatever that is (it's *raqia* in Hebrew) and the waters below. But it's not until day 5 in parallel to that, that we have the creatures who are going to be positioned, if you will, in the waters on the one hand, and sky in the other. So there's a nice matching here; it's very poetic. You've got major things here; you've got those who will populate, if you will, these major formations or frameworks. And then finally, day 3, with the emergence of dry land, and then that land producing vegetation, that's going to be the framework within which we have all

creatures of the land, showing up in day 6. So, some people think of it as kingdoms over here and kings there. Those who will “rule” the darkness and the light are going to be the constellations, sun, moon, and stars. And likewise, the creatures of the water and sky will dominate this particular sphere, and finally here, culminating in humankind’s creation: this will dominate the dry land.

Interestingly enough, day 7 doesn't have a closure to it. It says God rested, and he blessed and sanctified the Sabbath, so time is blessed at this point. Hebrews chapter 4 is a strong admonition from the author of Hebrews to be sure to enter into God's rest. I would suggest that we are still in day 7. Now, of course I've already given away to you how I can see the length of all these days: they are very long periods of time. God is at this point [now] no longer in engaged in creation, which is a phenomenal amount of work on each of those created days, but he is now sustaining the universe. The providential sustaining of the universe is God's rest. And of course, there are all sorts of theological implications to that as well.

Two additional biblical matters: I think there are three here. I think I added one, but anyway we'll see what happens! Taking the Bible seriously, we need to note that whether it's the narrative in chapter 2 or the poetry in chapter 1, God seems to be intimately involved in this process: “He made, He set, created, yes, formed.” You know in Genesis 2, this forming Adam out of the dust of the earth, that's a fairly intimate involvement and I'm not entirely certain I want to simply to relegate that to some idea of myth. At the same time, and again, taking the text seriously, the land and the water “bring forth,” which could fit then a beautiful, interweaving of God's creative processes along with His design for evolutionary processes to be working nicely in that whole issue. And I know, again this is an oversimplified presentation, but I simply want you to see, from the biblical perspective, we can have both. Again if you read the article on *yom* [day] you're aware of this - that it's an important issue. The word [*yom*] is translated “day” but even in the Genesis context, even in chapter 2, it doesn't need to be a 24 hour period. How do I know that? Well, your NIV won't help you here. So, let me read for you Genesis 2:4 with a literal translation of the Hebrew. We've already made our way through

Genesis 1. And God has finished the creation. And there have been seven days--seven *yoms* if you will. And here comes Genesis 2:4, “This is the account,” that’s that *toledot* word I was telling you about earlier. “This is the account of the heavens and the earth in the day when they were created.” So *yom* is used in that context to indicate the whole time he’s been talking about up until this point. Then, interestingly enough (we’ll pick this up next time), when God gives his warning to Adam, [literally it says] “in the day you eat it, you will surely die.” Again, translating that expression as “when” doesn’t do it justice. “In the day that you eat of it you will surely die.” God didn’t kill Adam off right away when they ate of the fruit. He lived a long time. “Day” can mean a long period of time.

When the terms evening and morning are used, some people say why evening; why not say morning first? But it’s probably a good way to think about evening, closing down the creative period that has just been unfolding in whatever way God has designed, and then morning that’s going to start up the next period, however we understand those periods.

## **H. Data from General Revelation**

Okay, looks like you’re still with me. We’ve looked into biblical materials. We’ve looked at the special revelation data. Now we’re going to look at general revelation a little bit, and see basically again very broad brush strokes. This is a really, really, close astronomical object--really close. It’s only twenty-six-hundred light years away. Believe it or not that is very close when we’re talking about the far reaches of the universe that our Hubble Telescope can tell us about. So it’s kind of beautiful; it is in a close part of the Milky Way.

When we’re talking about these issues, it’s important to consider all aspects of nature. It really is. Now I know this is where some of you may feel like I’m going to trample on your toes, and I don’t mean to do that. But I simply want to lay out for you some other things that are part of this picture. When you look at geology, for example,

you cannot only go into Grand Canyon and see millions of years there, but those of you who are studying geology at some point, you will encounter varves. Does anybody know what a varve is? It's a sedimentary deposition that you can actually measure years with. Okay, you can actually measure years with it, because in the spring time, the color of the deposition is different from the fall and the winter. Now, what's fascinating here is that in some places in Wyoming in the Green River formations, there are 7.5 million years represented, just there, and that's on top of whole bunch of other sedimentary layers. So, you know, there are all sorts of illustrations of this, and we need to deal with that. That's just one that I find particularly impressive--geological evidence, fossil materials.

When you start moving into the astronomical measurements, we not only have the age of the earth [4.5 billion years], but the universe at large is over 13 billion years old. This is based on light travel time, which is reasonably measured. Come tonight and you'll get a whole lot more in terms of how that works, the distances of the galaxies, and the fact that our universe is expanding now. That's pretty exciting too. It's expanding faster, there's accelerated expansion to the universe.

Well, saying all that, just one more thing we need to note and this is important. Sometimes people contrast the Bible with science and that's sort of doing apples and oranges. Data are the facts. Data are the facts that show up in both biblical texts and the created order. The things that I've just cited to you about seven and a half million years represented in varves; that's scientific fact. The things we just read from the Scripture, those are biblical facts. What we do with those on both sides are theories. Theology is theorizing about what the biblical text says, and science is doing the same thing with natural revelation. You can read the rest of this as it unfolds, the data from nature. It is important to distinguish (I mentioned this a little earlier) between what we have in a geological record, which is continuous and gives us an old earth (again, whether you like it or not, it gives us an old earth) and the fossil record, which is still intermittent. Maybe there is going to be a time here that there's going to be a continuous fossil record too, representing evolutionary change, but we don't see that yet.

## I. Possible Biblical and Scientific Interfaces

Sure, this is the last time in this class we're going to have all this stuff. I kind of like it, but some of you may not. We're coming at this from what is basically a theistic position; in other words, you and I affirm that there is a God, and He has something to do with this creation in which we are living. That's a theistic position. Now, keep in mind that the five issues I presented here are a synthesis of a lot more nuanced position. So keep that in mind. If your particular option isn't here, it's all right.

If you're going to come at this with a focus primarily on evolution as your guiding principle... let's say that you're convinced by what you see in the biological spheres, then, you're going to end up in the general camp, and again, there's different small areas here, but you're going to end up in general camp of the theistic evolution position which says that God, once he created life and created the universe, has chosen evolution as his mechanism for the unfolding of all the rest of this. That's where you're going to be. And again, how do you read Genesis 1, do we read it as a myth or as a theological statement?

Progressive creationism is a big umbrella, which is going to have one of these two general focuses. Again there are different nuances here, but one of these general focuses. One is that creation is the focus no longer evolution. Now, creation is the focus, but the term *yom* means a long period of time. The article you read for today, regarding the 24 hour day in Genesis, is coming from the day-age perspective. So "day" means long period of time, undefined long period of time and therefore you have all these developments we see in the natural world fitting into that somehow. That's one way of looking at progressive creationism. The other is to say, *yom* means "day," as we talk about a 24-hour day. But, it's the day on which God made particular announcements regarding creation on that day God said, and then in between there was a vast amount of time. It's an alternative form of that. It's alternative form that still allows for the scientific data indicating long ranges of time. But it's focusing on God's continual activity in some

way involved in creation.

The framework hypothesis comes at this from a different perspective. This is a primarily theological approach. It tries to get away from these questions of how long is a day, and how many ages, or how many years, how many millions of years we have in an age. Instead, it says that Genesis 1 has no inclination or purpose of being scientific. Instead, it is posing a theological statement. It is saying God made the frameworks, remember those three overarching things we talked about in days one, two, and three; God made the frameworks and also populated them as He wanted to do. This is intended to be a polemic against the surrounding culture. Does that make sense? Do you know what polemic is? It's a verbal battle. So this is a defense, if you will, maybe better to say an apologetic. It is taking on those cultures that have multiple gods and multiple beliefs. This is designed to show that it is God who has created the entirety of the structures which we see and the things that are part of those structures in contrast to Canaanite gods, who were multiple and generally fighting with each other, or Babylonian deities.

Young earth creationism, and again, I'm well aware that some of you probably come from this perspective, and understand that I don't want to trample on where you are. The idea here is that the days as talked about in Genesis 1 are intended to be 24 hour days. Therefore God has miraculously created in that limited time frame, the earth is approximately only ten thousand years old, and the things that we see and measure make it apparent that it is different so God has created with an apparent age built in. Some of you may be aware as well, that there is a strong emphasis on what the flood has done, Noah's flood in Genesis 6. We may say more about that if you have questions on that later.

Well one more approach, this is five of fifty-three! Be thankful we're not covering all the rest of them too. Some people come at this from another kind of theological perspective and say, interestingly enough, this has nothing whatsoever to do with God's revealing what happened on Day 1, and Day 2, and Day 3 of creation. Instead this is about when Moses was on Mount Sinai, receiving revelation from God, and of course, we have that, after the giving of the Ten Commandments in Exodus. Then this particular

position says that during that time, God also revealed, on particular days when Moses was up there, these aspects of God's created order. So the whole revelatory days approach also tries to get around having to deal with the apparent challenges of talking about science, on the one hand, and the biblical data on the other. I should've said scientific data.

Well, let's do a couple more things with regard to that and we'll finish up. One of the things that we need to do as we're addressing this (and I've intimated this already); it's important to talk about both general revelation and special revelation and accord them their proper treatment. Treat them with integrity. I will confess, and here is where my stripes really show! I will confess that I have some distinct problems with attributing all of the evidence we see in geology to the flood. That has some distinct problems of how floods work. We just have to look into floods [and note the disruption in sedimentation layers. That's not what we see in these geological sequences I have noted.] So you know, that's going to be a problem. On the other hand, I have real problems just sort of dismissing Genesis 1 and 2 as a myth. Because the apostle Paul didn't; in Romans 5, he's reading Adam as a literal Adam. So, we have got to deal with these things.

The second thing that I think we need to keep in mind is creation as testimony to who God is. God calls us (in Romans 1) to look at creation and we're supposed to know something about God through that. Therefore if God built what amounts to be deception, (it looks like it is really old, but it really isn't)... If he's built that into the creation, there's something about God that I'm not sure is very, well, good. I suggest to you, and I think you've gotten this already, God uses both his miraculous interventions in the processes of creation and He also uses what He designed to be functioning. i.e. evolutionary processes. So, we've got, again, a tremendously intricate interweaving of God's creative activities along with his providential overseeing. Well, that's a lot of ideas that may or may not have made you happy! I've got to finish this up today. I've got five minutes to do it.

Talking about creating humankind (and this gets back to Lucky's question earlier on), in ancient Near Eastern thinking (this is not only in biblical material now; it's the

wider sphere), when we talk about image, image had everything to do with function. You asked about Spirit; it's going to be even more than that. It certainly doesn't talk about physical representation; that's not the deal. But it's how this image (and in this case it's humans being the image of God) is designed to function. Adam, and then later, Eve, was to be God's viceroy. He was to function in terms of being a ruler over the creation. So it's a functional kind of thing. As we look at how God has created Adam, composition is a very stale word, but we need to keep in mind that we're talking about the dust of the earth. The Hebrew word, when we have human beings created, is this term '*adam*'. But *adam* is called *nephesh hayah*, which is exactly the same word that is used of the rest of the animal world. What's different is God's breath and that shows up in chapter 2. God breathes the breath of life into Adam; that's what makes him unique, and it gives us the image. When Eve was created, also in Genesis 2, that's after a long period of time. Adam has named the animals, and naming, by the way, is the way of demonstrating dominance. Adam has named the animals, hasn't found a helper suitable for him, and therefore God creates Eve, and here's the term. Eve is to be an *ezer*, which means help, *kenegdo*, which means opposite him. Sometimes "helpmate" means something along the terms of the slave; that's not what's going on here. In fact, what's really fascinating if you look it up in a Bible dictionary, the word *ezer* is generally speaking used of God. God is a help. The Psalms go over this a number of times. So *ezer* is not a demeaning word in any way, shape or form. Eve is created to be a help, Adam's equal--opposite him. They're going to live in harmony, until the end of Genesis 2.

The purposes of creation? Well, God says, "be fruitful and multiply." Tend the earth, steward it properly, work with it; that'll show up in Genesis 2 as well. And then a theological purpose and it's an extremely important one. Looking way ahead, Adam is going to be the vehicle that God's going to use in terms of implementing his redemptive purposes. So when Paul in Romans 5 talks about the first Adam, and Christ as a second Adam, if you will, you know, God and his purposes prepared this a long, long time ahead of time. The creation of Adam is the vehicle for the incarnation later on.

Just one last thing in terms of this, and I'm going to make a couple comments

about the *Enuma Elish*; then we'll quit. Notice, that in chapter 1, "God" is the term that shows up in your English translation. God is the word that translates in Hebrew word *Elohim*, and it has a sense of transcendence to it. "Might, power" - a perfect term for Genesis chapter 1 because it's God who has created everything. In chapter 2, your English translation is probably reading upper case L, O, R, D. We're going to say a whole lot more about that name later on, but it's translating YHWH, which is God's covenant name. Notice as God is interacting specifically with Adam and Eve, He is walking in the garden as he going to be doing in chapter 3. He is in relationship with them. This is his covenant relationship name. What's fascinating is that both *Elohim* and YHWH show up in chapter 2, noting that they're both part who God is, for Adam and for Eve; but once the serpent appears on the scene in Genesis 3, the serpent only uses *Elohim*. The serpent knows about God's power and might. But serpent has no inkling about God's relational capacity. Eve only uses that too. Okay, real quick and we'll stop. Hope you read the *Enuma Elish* by now. Notice that this is vastly different; I'll get to those things in a moment, but there are some parallels and at least we want to make a note of them. There is an apparent creation from nothing with water and darkness prominent. Those are pretty general parallels. We'll talk through the contrasts quickly. There is blatant dualism here, in contrast to Genesis 1 where God is solely God. Apsu, Tiamat and on from that point all the way down to Marduk. Gods are a little bit mad, and I use that in terms of mindless frenzy, not anger, although they're that, too.

And then as we'll see--how does this statement go? Can't remember who said it, but it runs something like this: After God created humans in his own image, human beings have consistently repaid the compliment! Did you get that? I'll say it again. "After God created humans in his own image," I'll be more blatant now, "human beings keep recreating God in our own image." In other words, we're lowering God, reducing Him.. That's what's happening I would suggest.

We need to stop; it's a little bit after, sorry to keep you late. Thank you for your attention, and again, if these things are burning questions for you, come tonight, come next week, we'll pursue them a little bit.

Transcribed by Dave Hicks and Peter Lee  
Rough edited by Ted Hildebrandt  
Edit Elaine Phillips